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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4515th meeting

Thursday, 18 April 2002, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 17 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/431).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 17 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/431)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jacob (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia), Mr. Aldouri (Iraq), Mr. Haneda (Japan), Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeil Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Zainuddin (Malaysia), Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar), Mr. Rashwan (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) and Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates), took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 18 April 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/439 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Thursday, 18 April 2002, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and with previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in the letter dated 17 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, which is contained in document S/2002/431.

I should like to say at the outset that the Council will meet until 7 p.m. If there are speakers remaining on the list at that time, we will resume the meeting tomorrow morning.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for responding to the request by the Arab Group to convene this meeting.

For the twentieth consecutive day, the intensive Israeli military aggression continues against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority — despite Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) and despite the appeals from all corners of the Earth calling for an end to the Israeli aggression and for the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from the Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps which they have occupied since the beginning of this latest military aggression.

As time passes, the horrific consequences of the Israeli aggression are coming to light, specifically the shocking humanitarian situation on the ground. The Israeli forces have committed gross violations of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, including the premeditated killing of civilians and wide-ranging, intensive destruction.

The war crimes committed by Israel are merely a part of a premeditated plan to destroy not only the Palestinian Authority but also Palestinian infrastructure as a means of destroying the very present and future of the Palestinian people. In the Jenin refugee camp, the horrific Israeli acts went even further, with revelations of a wide-ranging massacre perpetrated against the camp's inhabitants, including women and children. Helicopters launched missiles into the camp, where 15,000 people live in an area of only 1 square kilometre. Bulldozers demolished homes, in many cases with the inhabitants still inside. An even uglier crime occurred when the occupation forces for more than ten days prevented the International Red Cross, the Palestinian Red Crescent, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and other humanitarian organizations from entering the camp or providing any form of emergency assistance.

Thus, the wounded suffered under the rubble, the dead lay where they fell and the corpses could not be recovered by their relatives.

Even now, the occupation forces are imposing tight restrictions on the entry of humanitarian, food and medical supplies as well as on the media and on the entry of necessary equipment and specialized teams. That alone is a war crime whose perpetrators must be brought to justice

In the past, we have called the States of the world to indict General Shaul Mufaz, Commander of the Israel Defence Force, for acts of murder against civilians. We repeat that call and specifically mention the commanders of the military units that participated in the Jenin camp massacre. Over the past years, many massacres have been carried out against the Palestinian people, from the massacres at Deir Yassin and Kafr Kassem to that at Khan Yunis. All of those massacres were directly related, and they were linked to one person named Ariel Sharon — Colonel Sharon in Qibia, Defence Minister Sharon in Sabra and Shatilla. Such massacres must not be repeated. The international community must ensure that they do not happen again, and that begins with taking a genuine, serious stand on the Jenin massacre.

Let me be clear. First, there was a massacre in Jenin, regardless of the number of casualties. Secondly, war crimes were perpetrated everywhere else — not only in Jenin. Civilian areas, including heavily populated areas, were fired on with heavy weapons, resulting in extensive, astonishing destruction. Even the ancient towns of Nablus, Jenin and Bethlehem were razed. Water and electricity networks, roads, buildings and various ministries with all their records and archives were destroyed. Males were grouped together, abducted and detained, with approximately 5,000 detainees currently in mass detention camps. More than 1 million Palestinians have been subjected to collective punishment that is continuing now, including a curfew and deprivation of essential needs. Then there is the military siege of the Ramallah headquarters of President Arafat, the leader of our people and our national symbol, and the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ was born.

Aside from the fact that all this is politically unacceptable, that the situation under siege is unbearable from a humanitarian point of view, and that it constitutes a grave and gross violation of international norms, even religious norms, it is truly shameful that some parties apparently accept the Israeli conditions for ending the sieges — conditions that in themselves are grave violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, including the deportation of Palestinians inside the Church of the Nativity, and of whatever is left of the agreements between the parties such as handing over some individuals from the President's office. We condemn that strongly. We condemn any condoning of the Israeli position, which is an escalation of its rejection of Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). The Palestinian side will not accept any negotiation or conditions with respect to the implementation of those resolutions. We insist on their immediate implementation.

One week ago in Madrid, in the presence of the Secretary-General, the "quartet" adopted an important statement in that regard. That same day, the Security Council adopted a statement supporting the "quartet" statement and insisting on the immediate implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). That statement gave us hope. Along with our

Arab brethren, we agreed to delay required Council action until results were visible on the horizon.

It is also known that the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell, visited the region in an attempt to stem the deterioration, to control the situation and to revive the political track. For our part, we expressed our readiness to cooperate fully with Mr. Powell in the immediate implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) and on the political front.

For their part, Mr. Sharon and the Israeli Government took all the necessary stands to ensure the failure of the Secretary's mission, including refusing to withdraw from Palestinian cities and ignoring for 14 days Mr. Bush's call for an end to military activity and a beginning of withdrawal. Still worse, they refused to withdraw, even after the Secretary's arrival. They persisted in creating new facts on the ground, including besieging cities from which they had previously withdrawn and continuing to carry out military activities, to occupy other cities and to lay siege to President Arafat's headquarters and to the Church of the Nativity. The Israeli side has openly rejected the Council's resolutions and the appeals of the world's leaders. It persists in its aggression, all the while flouting the will of the Council, international law and international humanitarian law.

The question must now be asked: what does the Security Council intend to do? We believe that it must invoke Chapter VII of the Charter to enforce the implementation of its resolutions. The least we can expect is that the Council will show seriousness in the level of respect for its resolutions and in condemning the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli side. At the moment, our expectations are very low. We call upon the Council to consider and then adopt the draft resolution now before it, contained in document S/2002/363.

The Secretary-General has repeatedly expressed clear positions on the current tragedy, including calling on the Security Council to take the necessary measures. His doing so undoubtedly proceeds from his great moral and political responsibilities. We salute the Secretary-General, and we call upon the Council to respond to him, as it has always done. Today, the Secretary-General presented a detailed briefing on his clear position that the Security Council must create a credible and effective multinational force, composed of States ready to participate, that should be dispatched to the Palestinian territories, all under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter.

We have always called for an international presence in the Palestinian occupied territory, including Jerusalem. On many occasions we attempted to cooperate with a number of Security Council members, including the members of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus and France, in order to work towards forming an observer force, or even a force of civilian observers. Unfortunately, we have not succeeded thus far.

Now we agree with the Secretary-General that observers will not be able to undertake the required mission. We call on the Security Council to quickly respond to the Secretary-General and adopt his specific proposal in this regard. The Palestinian Authority must be given an opportunity to rebuild its infrastructures, including its security apparatus. Some protection must be provided to our people, and some confidence in peace must be revitalized among them. The two parties must agree to implement what has been agreed upon so far in order to find a political climate and a means that can be achieved through the Secretary-General's proposal.

We should like to express our satisfaction at the widespread understanding on the need to take up all issues, including security and political issues. We welcome the statements on the need to revitalize the political track in order to achieve the vision of two States, Palestinian and Israeli.

We have lately been apprised of the idea of an international conference. At this point, I shall not take up the ludicrous statements being made by the Israeli side regarding the participation of the Palestinian side. Frankly, such statements cannot be dealt with seriously. I do, however, want to take up the idea itself. It is an idea that the Palestinian and Arab side had set forth in the past.

However, let me be clear at this point. Such a conference must, in the first place, be international, meaning full participation of the members of the "quartet" — the United Nations, the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union — as well as others. Secondly, the conference must take up all aspects of the problem in the Middle East, including the Syrian-Israeli track. Thirdly, and what is most important, the conference must be based on a comprehensive and detailed political vision, to be agreed upon before the convening of the conference.

The conference should not be a mere mechanism, but should rather set forth a comprehensive and substantial plan. Substance, I would like to stress, should be first and foremost. Then, a successful conference leading to negotiation among the parties on the details, and working rapidly towards a final settlement, may be convened.

We agree with those who speak of the need to find a means to reconcile the traditional resolutions of the Security Council, 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the new initiatives, including Mr. Powell's statement in Louisville, resolution 1397 (2002) and Prince Abdullah's initiative, which then became a resolution of the Arab Summit. We must find this road. It is the road towards a solution and peace. It is a road that allows for the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposal made today.

I must repeat at this point that the first, indeed the only, step now needed is the immediate implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), particularly with regard to immediate Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities, which would pave the way to the situation on the ground of before September 2000. In the absence of that, there can be no talk of any other step. In the absence of such a step, I fear that Mr. Sharon and his Government will take us all in the region, and perhaps even outside the region, to the brink.

Let us all make sure that that does not happen.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Israel, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): Those who are genuinely interested in bringing peace to the Middle East must today think carefully about which steps would enhance this process, and which would be counterproductive.

Both Israelis and Palestinians have declared their agreement to certain principles. At the outset of the Oslo peace process, and repeatedly since then, the Palestinians committed themselves to renouncing terrorism and violence. Everyone accepts that they have failed to do so.

Both parties have declared their acceptance of the Tenet and Mitchell plans in all their aspects. And Israel has accepted the Zinni bridging proposal as a means to get there, in accordance with resolution 1402 (2002). The Palestinians have failed to do likewise.

Israel is completing its withdrawal from Palestinian cities in accordance with resolution 1402 (2002), and it will continue to do so in the coming days. But let us not forget that resolution 1402 (2002) did not call for withdrawal in a vacuum, and the Palestinians, in defiance of the Council, have failed to undertake even minimal steps in the implementation of the resolution, including a meaningful ceasefire and an end to terrorism and incitement.

What should be the Council's response to this situation? Is it to adopt even more one-sided resolutions and make political concessions in the face of terror? Are our objectives served by making new and greater demands of Israel while systematically ignoring the Palestinian failure to do the one thing to which they have repeatedly committed themselves — namely, to stop violence and terror? Surely, we can agree that our objectives are not served in that manner.

The use of the term "massacre" in the context of the battle that took place in Jenin is of course politically convenient for the Palestinian side. It is a distortion that attempts to create a moral equivalence between the suicide bomber, who deliberately targets civilians, and the soldier, whose mission is to protect against them.

What happened in Jenin was an intense gun battle between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian terrorists. The number of casualties which has been reported — as opposed to those alleged — the 23 dead Israeli soldiers, booby-trapped buildings and bodies, all attest to that fact. The so-called reports of massacres have been contradicted by the facts, as has been confirmed by foreign journalists, and sources such as *The Washington Post*, *Newsday* and CNN. The Security Council will do itself no credit by accepting baseless and distorted allegations as fact.

The real massacres here are committed by the suicide bombers who blow themselves up in crowds of Israeli civilians. Surely it is not an exaggeration to describe them as such. They are not searching out terrorists; they are not confiscating illegal weapons; they are looking for men, women and children to murder. For those who care about respect for humanitarian law, the real question with respect to Jenin and other Palestinian cities and refugee camps relates to how these civilian areas became centres of terrorist activities in the first place. Despite clear provisions of international humanitarian law and

repeated Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1296 (2000) and 1208 (1998), the civilian character of these refugee camps has been seriously damaged.

Does anyone inquire how it is that the large storehouses of weapons and explosives and bomb factories could exist in a supposedly civilian refugee camp administered by the United Nations? For weeks and months and years, as terrorists have armed themselves and taken up residence within these camps, we have heard barely a word from the international community, from the United Nations or any humanitarian agency. It is only now, after terrorist massacres have forced Israel's hand, that many have responded, pointing the finger at Israel's actions rather than those of the terrorists.

Israel abhors the fact that it was compelled to use violence in response to the Palestinians' abject failure to live up to their commitments. We are obligated by international law — and despite the allegations we have done our utmost, in extremely difficult conditions — to protect the civilians and international personnel who were at risk from the situation on the ground. I could cite many examples of other countries that have mobilized their forces against terrorism in a far less careful and discriminating fashion, and have done so free from Security Council scrutiny.

No one can deny that the situation is difficult and that civilians have suffered. Everything possible must be done to ensure their protection. Surely, this must begin by ending, once and for all, the use made by terrorists of civilians and civilian installations.

The pattern of distortion and abuse of civilian objects is nowhere clearer than with the situation at the Church of the Nativity, from which gunmen continue to fire at Israeli soldiers. Both customary and conventional law make it clear that using cultural property, such as holy sites, to support a military attack constitutes a war crime. Indeed, international law has made it clear — as have many States, including members of this Council — that when such objects are unlawfully used for military purposes they lose their protection as cultural objects and become legitimate military targets.

Despite this, Israel has not returned fire at the gunmen holding hostage the Church of the Nativity. Rather, we continue to try to negotiate with those hiding inside in order to bring about a non-violent resolution of the stand-off. So far, those inside have shown no interest in ending the crisis in a peaceful manner. Here too, the Security Council will do itself no credit by accepting baseless and distorted allegations as fact.

During the visit by Secretary of State Powell to the region, progress was achieved. We are hopeful that his continued efforts and the engagement of the American Administration will ensure that the parties get back on the right track. In this regard, we hope there will be a positive response to Prime Minister Sharon's peace conference initiative, to his positive comments relating to the Saudi peace proposal to and his willingness to negotiate with moderate Arab leaders.

Mr. Powell's visit also succeeded in quieting the situation on the northern border somewhat, despite the inaction of the Council. That is not to say that the situation has been resolved; far from it. Hizbullah's belligerency continues. The Government of Lebanon remains under international obligation to rectify this situation at once and to prevent any resumption of Hizbullah's illegal attacks across the Blue Line.

The Council must also bear in mind that throughout the period of Hizbullah's attacks, an internationally recognized armed military presence in the area failed to bring these attacks to an end. In fact, despite Israel's full and confirmed withdrawal, and the presence of UNIFIL, terrorism emanating from Lebanon has continued virtually unabated.

Is there any legitimate basis to believe that were such a presence to exist in the Palestinian territories the result would be any different? Would any international force confiscate illegal weapons, intercept suicide bombers and search for hidden explosives? Would it stop payments by Chairman Arafat himself to suicide bombers? Would it do anything other than deter the actions of Israel while enabling Palestinian terrorism to continue unhindered, in violation of signed agreements and resolution 1373 (2002), with the protection of an internationally sanctioned shield?

As stated in the Mitchell report, and as repeated by virtually all members of the international community, the international presence could serve no useful role and cannot come about without the agreement of the parties. Israel has made it clear that we accept the idea of third-party, American monitors to supervise the implementation of Tenet and Mitchell,

and we were willing to favourably consider an international presence in the context of a comprehensive settlement. But we cannot put our faith in a robust international presence which could not be effective in the face of a continuing strategy of Palestinian terrorism.

If both parties have accepted the vision laid out in resolution 1397 (2002) of two States living side by side in secure and recognized boundaries, if they have accepted Tenet and Mitchell, how did we get where we are today?

Israel has no war with the Palestinian people. We have no war with the Palestinian aspiration for statehood. We have proved this at Camp David and at Taba. We have a war with terror and with those who are determined not to create the Palestinian State, but to destroy the Jewish one. It is time that the international community came face to face with the fact that unfortunately this rejectionism exists at the highest echelons of the Palestinian Authority.

Allow me to share but one example, a selection from a document dated 13 September 2001 from Chairman Arafat's office addressed to notable Israeli Arab citizens. Chairman Arafat exhorts them to support the intifada, to "draw up with blood the map of one homeland" and to continue the steadfast resistance in "the cities occupied since 1948". Chairman Arafat wrote:

> "It will continue to be the intifada of the one people and one outburst of blood.... It will continue to be a prolonged intifada of rage ... a prolonged intifada of independence ... an intifada of innumerable generations which will continue until our supreme national dream is fulfilled."

Is this the voice of moderation and coexistence with whom Israel is expected to make peace? Is this the language of one who has renounced violence and terrorism, who seeks to negotiate a compromise solution?

The Council will not serve the cause of peace in the Middle East by condemning Israeli actions and ignoring the violence, terrorism and incitement that continues to emanate from the Palestinian leadership. Resolution 1402 (2002) implicitly recognized this by issuing a call for a meaningful ceasefire and for cooperation with General Zinni, together with Israeli withdrawal. Israeli withdrawal is already under way, and Prime Minister Sharon has made clear than it will continue and be accelerated in the coming days. The rest of resolution 1402 (2002) is still awaiting attention from the Palestinian side.

The best hope for peace will come from the international community's demand that both sides implement what they have already agreed, not from more concessions to terrorism. Let us build on the progress that was achieved by Secretary Powell and work for the implementation of the existing framework of agreements, which will lead us to a just and lasting peace for both peoples.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Mr. President, I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Arab Group — whose chairmanship I have the honour to hold this month — to thank you for responding so quickly to our request to hold this urgent meeting of the Security Council, at which we are considering once again the dangerous situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in the territories that are under the control of the Palestinian National Authority and which have been reoccupied by Israel.

This meeting is important because it is being held following the mission undertaken in the region by the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Colin Powell. As we all know, the international community as a whole had pinned its hopes on that mission, given the threats facing the security of the Middle East region as well as international peace and security. We must therefore think calmly about the potential consequences and repercussions of those threats at all levels.

Our hopes of seeing the provisions of resolution 1403 (2002) implemented have been dashed, because the Prime Minister of Israel is using a suicide policy as the basis for rejecting all United Nations resolutions, in particular those of the Security Council. He has even gone to the extreme by neglecting all international calls to resort to reason, to have foresight, to avoid political one-upmanship and to stop jeopardizing the interests of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples as well as the safety and security of the international community as a whole.

The results of the actions of the Israeli army, acting under direct orders from Prime Minister Sharon, have serious repercussions from the standpoint of international law, political norms and even human morality. To besiege an entire people; to resort to any and all means in order to starve them and deprive them of safety and medicine; to continue with the wholesale killing and massacring of innocent people in the camps, particularly in Jenin — under international law, these actions are considered war crimes against humanity, including crimes of liquidation and of genocide.

Despite the fact that the media, humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations, including Israeli ones, have been prevented from entering the camps to see what has been done by the Israeli authorities, it has been proved without a doubt that crimes of war have been committed against the Palestinian people. This was confirmed by Human Rights Watch, which said that collective punishment has been meted out to unarmed Palestinian civilians, including physical liquidation, detention and arbitrary arrests, which are considered by Human Rights Watch and by other humanitarian organizations to be war crimes and absolutely forbidden by international law.

The Israeli authorities have refused to allow any measures to be taken that could confirm what I have spoken of as well as the terrible crimes committed inside the camps. Israel has even prevented an international delegation headed by Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, from going to the occupied territories in accordance with a resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights, which is currently in session in Geneva. This is clearly an attempt on the part of Israel to stall so it can eliminate all traces of the crimes against humanity it has committed both inside and outside Palestinian camps.

The shocking and regrettable developments that we have witnessed since the adoption of resolution 1397 (2002) have given rise to doubts about the credibility of the Council, which has since adopted two more resolutions — 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) — aimed at forcing Israel to abide by international legitimacy and the collective will of the international community, as expressed through the Council.

The Security Council has time and again adopted resolutions whose goal is to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control and to avert its serious repercussions. We ask once again for the will of the international community to be affirmed. We do not want to shirk our responsibility or to take any action that is not in conformity with the provisions of international law or that contravenes any various humanitarian or ethical norms. We must say "enough is enough" to those who have made peaceful coexistence impossible and who have made violations of international law their trademark in political dealings. We must all assume this responsibility, without applying double standards or preferential treatment. International law is a comprehensive, integrated concept. Members of this international body must act in conformity with international commitments and must implement United Nations resolutions. Respect for and implementation of Security Council resolutions should not be the object of ridicule and disrespect. If they are, the Council will lose its legitimacy and credibility, which stem from the Charter. Because of Israel's refusal to abide by the international will, resolution of the Palestinian problem must be internationalized. That could be achieved through greater commitment on the part of the international parties, particularly the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the European Union.

What is needed now is, first, to compel Israel to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from the Palestinian cities and villages it has reoccupied. Second, all restrictions that the occupation authorities have imposed against humanitarian organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, must be removed. Third, all humanitarian organizations must be allowed to enter the territory, particularly the Jenin camp, in order to ensure that unarmed civilians receive international assistance. Fourth, the siege imposed against many sacred sites, including the Church of the Nativity, must be lifted. A humanitarian crime could be committed in that Church, an act that would remain a blemish on the world's conscience.

Fifth, the thought of expelling Palestinians from their land must be rejected, because, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, that would be a war crime. Sixth, the siege imposed against the Palestinian leadership must be lifted and the undermining of its symbols and sovereignty must stop immediately. Seventh, ambulances and humanitarian

workers must be allowed to move freely throughout the occupied territories.

Eighth, information blackouts, delays and misinformation must stop. The mass media and humanitarian organizations must be allowed to know what has occurred, to know what crimes have been committed in the field against Palestinian civilians. Ninth, there must be a positive response to the request of Mrs. Mary Robinson and her delegation to carry out a fact-finding mission in the occupied territory — which she was requested to lead by a resolution of the Commission on Human Rights.

Finally, the Secretary-General should be requested to send an international force to monitor events and the activities of the Israeli occupation authorities in the reoccupied areas.

These actions, which have been requested by numerous international parties and by many civil society and international organizations, are the only way to correct mistakes before the situation deteriorates even more than we could ever have expected.

In our view, sending an international force is the most appropriate means of protecting the Palestinian people from Israeli oppression and the only useful way to restore stability to the region. We welcome the initiative announced by the Secretary-General today to the Council to send such an international force. Resuming the political process is the only way to seek a settlement and to enable the Palestinian people to attain their inalienable right to establish their own State, alongside the State of Israel, in accordance with resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), and in keeping with the position adopted by the Arab summit in Beirut, a position which is supported by the entire international community.

(*spoke in French*)

I will give the interpreters an opportunity to switch languages and will now speak in French.

For three weeks now — or rather, I should say, 14 months — we have been faced with an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of the United Nations: an Israeli State, which owes its life to this Organization — because, let us not forget that it was a United Nations resolution that established its birth in 1948 — now expands, taking over its neighbours by confiscating their land and now committing war crimes. We think we must be dreaming, because we see it not only defying international law, but also defying its own protectors. An American intellectual recently said to me: "I have always supported Israel, but I can no longer support the Israel of Sharon."

That is why I believe that the resolution that we submitted to the Council several days ago, which we postponed out of respect for Secretary of State Colin Powell and the "quartet", is a wake-up call to the Western conscience, of which we have never despaired. I am one of those who believe that today the Council is being offered an opportunity to calm the demons of this new Israel that many no longer recognize, to enlighten those who support Israel about Arab opinions that are inflamed by injustice, and to admit that — if one wishes a law to be applicable to all — the law must not be written using two weights and two measures. I want to believe that the America that we discovered in our youth, with universal values, cannot be subjected to the whims of an extremist Likud's unbridled ultranationalism.

I express our hope of seeing all of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Caspian — the Europe of the French, the Europe of the British, the Europe of the Norwegians, the Europe of the Irish and the Europe of the Bulgarians — join its efforts with those of Russia and China, with those of the non-aligned States of the Council, to say: We want a just world, a civilized world; we reject the behaviour of an outlaw Israel.

May the members of the Council consider the suffering of the Palestinian people, who say they are ready to sacrifice 75 per cent of their historical land area in order to be able to live alongside Israel. It is up to Israel to prove that a cousin is part of the family and therefore cannot be a perpetual kidnapper.

The Arab world put all its political cards on the table at the Beirut summit: an end to belligerence, along with recognition, normalization and cooperation. Why has Mr. Sharon not yet seized the opportunity to say precisely what he is ready to do to pull the entire region out of crisis? I am afraid he may be incorrigible, but let those who deal with him and apparently let him get away with everything take the credit for saving a situation that the Eisenhower-Foster Dulles team was perfectly able to handle in very similar circumstances with David Ben-Gurion. The Bush-Powell team ought to be able to do as much.

It has often been said that there is no military solution to this conflict, but a political solution that requires a political state of mind. It is futile to conflate terrorism — which is heinous and condemnable because it strikes innocents — with a national liberation movement, for it must not be forgotten that the Palestinian territories have been occupied for 35 years. The Palestinian aspiration to freedom, independence and a State must be satisfied along with the Israeli right to security — I repeat, along with the Israeli right to security. That is what President Arafat's colleagues have said every day on CNN and every American television channel.

Once the political will makes itself felt, we shall, I repeat, have to return to the idea presented by President Ben Ali two years ago at the Cairo Summit — which has since been taken up by several statesmen and continues to be supported by our valiant and courageous Secretary-General — to send in a multilateral interposition force. It may be assumed that, once it has been dispatched, all violence will come to an end. Neither of the two parties, whom we hold to be responsible, would dare break the armistice. Such a force, which Mr. Annan recommends because he rightly believes the timing to be right, will observe and, if necessary — God forbid — intervene. Recent history has demonstrated the success of such enterprises.

For the moment, we must maintain our vigilance with this draft resolution and tell Tel Aviv: "Withdraw your troops from the towns, villages and holy sites. Do not touch Arafat. Implement the Security Council's resolutions. Stop your atrocities. Be straight with the law." Then peace will come.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), took a seat at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council has returned yet again to address the tragic results of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian territories, people, institutions and infrastructure.

Over the past few weeks, the Israeli Government has flouted the resolutions of the United Nations and the Security Council calling on it to withdraw from the cities, villages and territory that it has aggressively and unjustly entered and to respect the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War. It has thereby challenged all the values and principles of international humanitarian law, and the civilized world must respond with deterrent measures. It must affirm that it has not forgotten the lessons of the past century, when the international community stood resolutely against aggression and defeated it, erecting the pillars of a new world that today faces the open challenge of preventing history from repeating itself. We must reject the double standards, the violation of international law and the policies of arrogance and force that the Council has so far failed to deter.

The Council and all its members, particularly its permanent members, must stand up today in defence of the principles of international law and international humanitarian law and compel Israel, the Power that has reoccupied the Palestinian territories, to respect them. The Council must act decisively and immediately to dispatch a mission of its members to investigate the devastation wrought by Israeli aggression on Palestinian cities, the crimes committed against the Palestinian people and the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure. This mission should be accompanied by representatives of all the bodies and organs of the United Nations system, of its Secretary-General and of humanitarian assistance and human rights agencies. The mission should submit a report to the Council within two weeks. On the basis of that report, we could consider the international community's options with respect to legal measures to address recent and ongoing events. The aggressors of right and truth will know thereby that they shall not escape the hand of justice.

Also necessary is the Security Council's agreement immediately to dispatch an international force to verify a full Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, cities and villages that have been reoccupied since late March. One function of such a force would be to monitor the implementation of a ceasefire, the violence and the military confrontations and to protect the Palestinian people. It would also ensure that Israel does not in future resume the kind of practices, violations and aggression that have occurred in the past two weeks.

In this connection, Egypt supports the comprehensive proposal submitted by Secretary-General Kofi Annan this morning. The Security Council must today compel the Israeli Government to respect the freedom of action and movement of international relief organizations, such as the International Committees of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

What is required today of the States and organizations of the international community is to provide assistance and relief to the Palestinian people and to the legitimate Palestinian Authority, represented by President Arafat and his Government. We should start the process of rebuilding what has been destroyed by Israel's brutal aggression, which has left deep wounds in the physical well-being and in the psyche of the Palestinian people.

We have full confidence in the support of all friendly and principled Powers in rebuilding the institutions and infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, which Israel has destroyed, and in the perseverance of the Palestinian people. These are two elements that will enable us to overcome the present crisis.

What is required of the Council and its members, particularly its permanent members, is immediately to compel the Israeli Government to lift its siege on the headquarters of the legitimate, elected President of the Palestinian people, President Arafat, and to halt all desecration of Christian and Islamic holy places, particularly the Church of the Nativity, which is still hostage to Israel aggression.

The right of all peoples to resist foreign occupation is a legitimate legal right under international law and the United Nations Charter. To state otherwise is to confuse the facts and is a denial of internationally recognized legitimacy. It is not possible or conceivable to ask the Palestinian people to accept occupation, the settlements and the colonization of its land by aggressive groups living in the settlements with the support of the Israeli Defence Force, which is implementing a policy of oppression against the Palestinian people.

I would like to make some final comments concerning the grave and tragic situation in the Middle East arising from the Israeli Government's actions. These observations are basically an attempt to find a way out of the crisis and to avert confrontation. First, there is no military solution to this conflict. Israel and its Government will eventually come to the conclusion that acts of resistance to occupation will not end until Israel ends its aggression and its occupation.

Secondly, the settlement of the Palestinian question should stem from Israel's recognition of the inevitability of its full withdrawal from all the Palestinian territories occupied since 4 June 1967, thus realizing the legitimate national aspiration of the Palestinian people to establish a Palestinian State, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Thus, finally, measures could be agreed upon to provide security for everyone.

All these elements possess the legitimacy of unanimous international acceptance. The international community must fully back this concept and must use the ways and means necessary to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, on the basis of the norms of international law and international agreements.

It is essential that all parties recognize their responsibilities in this matter and act accordingly, taking into account the pressures of time and of the accumulating anger and hatred. We must therefore take immediate action to gain control of the situation, dispatch an international force immediately and insist on Israeli withdrawal from the reoccupied territories and the cessation of all military operations against the Palestinian Authority and its territory. We hope that the Security Council will rise to the challenges it faces and to the demands of this very serious situation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We are meeting in the Council for the fourth time in almost as many weeks to

discuss, yet again, the ever-worsening situation in the Middle East. It is indeed a matter of concern to the international community that Israel persists in its defiance of the successive resolutions adopted by the Council in its recent meetings. The tragedy in the Middle East continues to pose a mounting threat to regional peace. It also represents a serious humanitarian crisis, which the Secretary-General has aptly described as an appalling humanitarian situation.

The recent massacre in Jenin was as excessive as it was inexcusable. According to the United Nations Special Coordinator, who visited the camp, Jenin looks like a calamity-stricken area. Jenin is yet another chapter written in the blood of innocent people, while the memories of Srebrenica and Rwanda are still fresh in the minds of humanity and haunting the conscience of mankind.

Nothing could have justified the wanton killing of dozens, if not hundreds, of Palestinians. This happened in spite of, and in defiance of, Security Council resolutions. There is a need for an immediate, comprehensive and impartial international inquiry. While Chairman Arafat has demonstrated commendable respect for humanitarian law by denouncing all terrorist attacks which target innocent civilians, Israel too must be expected to abide by international and humanitarian law.

For its part, the Security Council cannot be unmindful of its special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It must not allow selectivity and double standards in the implementation of its resolutions. The Council must now take decisive and effective measures under Chapter VII of the Charter to ensure the immediate cessation of all Israeli military action and the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories, as well as the urgent resumption of the political process for the settlement of the Palestinian issue in accordance with its own resolutions. The Council's very credibility and moral authority now depend on this.

Pakistan deplores the killing of innocent civilians in the region. We welcome the Secretary-General's call for the deployment of an international force to ensure safety and to provide an opening for diplomatic moves. The urgent need for international intervention to save the situation from further deterioration was adequately highlighted in the Secretary-General's statement to the Council. We support his proposal, and we believe that the immediate deployment of an international force in the region would not only create a secure environment through the cessation of violence, but also pave the way for putting the peace process back on track. The deployment of such a multinational force must be immediately authorized by the Council.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening yet another meeting on this item. We come together once again to express our grave concern over the failure of Israel to implement Security Council resolutions. Indeed, Israel has yet to implement Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), and its inaction has frustrated the efforts of the international community to achieve a meaningful ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations. Throughout, Israel has continued to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority and to place its legitimately elected leaders under siege.

The wilful disregard of the Security Council cannot be allowed to continue. The Council must now take decisive action to ensure full, unconditional and immediate compliance with its resolutions, as well as respect for international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949. For these reasons, we support the call by the Secretary-General for the Security Council to authorize the deployment of an impartial multinational force, formed by a coalition of the willing, to work with the parties to end the cycle of violence. We agree that such a force would need to have a robust mandate and credible strength, and to be of sufficient size to carry out that mandate.

I would like to underscore the sentiment expressed by President Mbeki, as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, with regard to breaking the chain of violence in the Middle East. He noted that it is necessary to end the dialogue of arms to prepare the way for a dialogue of peace: violence cannot be given the right to veto peace.

The Non-Aligned Movement is gravely concerned over reports of the killing of large numbers of civilians in the occupied territory, in particular in the Jenin refugee camp, by the Israel Defence Force.

Residents of the Jenin refugee camp have reported massacres by Israeli solders and the secret burial of Palestinians in mass graves. Clearly, the time has come for the United Nations to request the Secretary-General to carry out an impartial investigation to establish the full scope of the tr gic events that have taken place in Jenin.

The events in Jenin are, however, only part of a much larger humanitarian and human rights crisis in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, Israeli forces have widely flouted international humanitarian principles and human rights standards. The Security Council must support the Secretary-General's demand that Israel provide full access for humanitarian agencies and services.

The Security Council cannot allow the siege of the headquarters of President Arafat to continue. The Palestinian Authority cannot be expected to exercise control while its elected leaders are isolated and its infrastructure is being systematically destroyed. Similarly, the stand-off at the Church of the Nativity, which is sacred to people throughout Palestine and the rest of the world, cannot be allowed to continue for a moment longer.

We are also gravely concerned at the detention of Palestinian civilians and their leaders by Israel. The continued detention of Palestinian leaders will not promote peace and political dialogue, and it will be interpreted by the Palestinian people and the wider international community as a sign that Israel is not serious about implementing measures towards a peaceful negotiated solution.

Members of the Non-Aligned Movement have already made numerous practical suggestions, which the Security Council has yet to adopt, on how to address the situation on the ground. The Non-Aligned Movement believes that, ultimately, a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can be achieved only through a political, rather than a military, process. We have consistently called for the deployment of an effective multinational presence on the ground in Palestine. We share the Secretary-General's conviction that such a third-party presence is essential to the process of restoring mutual confidence and making parallel progress on both the political and the security fronts.

Therefore, we call on the Security Council to act to ensure compliance with its own resolutions, to secure the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces and the signing of a ceasefire by both parties, and to authorize the deployment of an international presence on the ground. The draft resolution presented by the Group of Arab States (S/2002/363) addresses the fundamental concerns that we have just outlined, and it deserves the Council's unanimous support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey, Iceland and Liechtenstein also subscribe to this statement.

The last time the Security Council held a public meeting on this issue, the European Union expressed its hopes for the 10 April meeting of the "quartet" and warmly welcomed Secretary of State Powell's mission. The outcome of the Madrid meeting demonstrated the international community's firm commitment to peace and to a better future for the peoples of the Middle East. In the joint statement read out by the Secretary-General and supported by the Security Council (S/2002/369, annex), we all expressed our grave concern at the current situation, including the growing humanitarian crisis and the ever-increasing risk to regional security. We reiterate our shared condemnation of violence and terrorism, express our deep distress at the loss of innocent Palestinian and Israeli lives, and extend our deepest sympathy to the families of those killed and wounded. We believe that there has been too much suffering and too much bloodshed. We call on the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to act in the interests of their own people, the region and the international community, and to halt immediately their senseless confrontation.

The European Union deplores the fact that, despite all calls of the international community, Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) continue to be ignored. In this regard, we call on Israel to halt immediately its military operations in the Palestinian territories. We call for an immediate, meaningful and effective ceasefire and the immediate

and full withdrawal of the Israeli troops from all Palestinian cities reoccupied since 29 March and other areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. These resolutions must be implemented fully and immediately. There is no room for selective implementation. We recall the obligation of all Members of the United Nations to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter.

The virtual destruction of the Palestinian Authority and its infrastructure, the continued isolation of Chairman Arafat, the humiliation and confinement of the Palestinian civilian population and the disregard for them and for their most fundamental rights and the violations of international humanitarian law are unacceptable. These actions must end immediately; they are contrary to international law and they are unjustified. Israel must immediately stop extra-judicial killings, lift the closures and restrictions in the territories and reverse its settlement policy.

Chairman Arafat, the recognized and elected leader of the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian Authority, for their part, must undertake immediately the maximum possible effort to stop terrorist attacks, act decisively within their capacity to dismantle terrorist infrastructures and stop incitement to violence. Terrorist attacks against Israelis must end immediately. They are unacceptable, illegal and gravely harm the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. We note in this regard the statement issued on 13 April by Chairman Arafat and welcome in particular his condemnation of all terrorist acts targeting Israeli and Palestinian civilians and his rejection of the use of violence and terror against civilians as a way to achieve political goals. We believe he must show clearly that he is capable of living up to his commitments and must produce concrete results.

The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories is appalling and constitutes a matter of deep concern to us. It is absolutely unacceptable that humanitarian and medical organizations and personnel continue to confront risks and restrictions in performing their work and in accessing those populations in need. Israel must allow them full and unimpeded access.

We reiterate our call on Israel to allow diplomatic and consular representatives to fully perform their tasks, in particular to gain access to and protect their own citizens in the territories.

The European Union considers the reports on the humanitarian situation at the Jenin refugee camp to be extremely alarming. Although there is wide discrepancy in reports on the number of casualties, missing people and those still trapped under collapsed buildings, we deplore the loss of civilian life that has taken place and the widespread and senseless destruction of civilian, medical and humanitarian infrastructure reported by the international humanitarian agencies granted limited access to the camp.

Israel's legitimate fight against terrorism is not served by intimidating and harassing innocent civilians, depriving them of their dignity and erasing their means of livelihood and hopes for the future. It only breeds more irrational desperation and hatred. Israel must fully comply with international humanitarian principles, including the United Nations Conventions on the protection of civilians in times of war, and refrain from excessive use of force.

It must extend its fullest possible cooperation to humanitarian agencies and organizations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross, consistent with its obligations under international humanitarian law, both in Jenin and across the territories. These organizations urgently need to gain unrestricted access to the camp in order to allow them to care for the large numbers of people in need of basic relief supplies and carry out their humanitarian mandates.

The unresolved standoff at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is also a cause of deep concern.

This conflict has no military solution. The political road-map and goals to put an end to it are well known and have already been set out very clearly: Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, which formed the basis for the Madrid Conference of 1991, the creation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State and security guarantees for the State of Israel, as spelled out in resolution 1397 (2002), as well as the Arab League's recent support of Crown Prince Abdullah's initiative for peace. What is needed, more than ever, is political will from both parties and statesmanship from their leaders.

We urge the parties to fully cooperate with the efforts of Secretary Powell as well as of Special Envoy Zinni and others to implement the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell report's recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement. There must be immediate and parallel movement towards near-term and tangible political progress and towards a series of concrete steps leading to permanent peace.

The European Union remains convinced that an impartial third-party monitoring mechanism on the ground is essential to the process of restoring mutual confidence and making progress on both the political and security fronts. We stand ready to participate in such a mechanism. Further, we support the Secretary-General in his call for a multinational force to be sent to the Middle East. Nevertheless, to be effective it will have to be acceptable to both sides. It is time to take concerted action to help bring an end to the violence and to provide space for political and diplomatic negotiations.

The European Union continues to make every effort with the parties, the countries in the region, the United States, the United Nations and Russia to find a definitive settlement to this conflict. In this regard, the Quartet of principals plans to meet in Washington, D.C., on 2 May. The European Union is fully behind the efforts of Secretary of State Powell to bring both parties to an agreement on a ceasefire. We stand ready to assist the parties in implementing their agreements and would be ready to attend an international peace conference.

We want to reiterate in the present circumstances our aim of improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and our declared objectives of supporting the reconstruction, preservation and strengthening of the Palestinian Authority, including through efforts to rebuild its infrastructure and security and governance capacity, of providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians and of assisting in economic and institutional reconstruction.

The present dangerous situation in the Middle East threatens regional security and stability. We reiterate our concern at the violence along the border between Lebanon and Israel. In conclusion, we call for an end to the violations of the United Nations-determined Blue Line, condemn the attacks originating in Lebanese territory and call on all parties involved to show the utmost restraint.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) *(spoke in French)*: As I said to you last time, Mr. President, as recently as 9 April, Morocco is pleased to see you in the chair, and we wish you much patience and courage in an extremely tense international situation, in which your knowledge of the United Nations system will be highly appreciated by all of us to advance peace and justice.

If you remember, Mr. President, when I took the floor in the Council on 9 April, I expressed the hope that the mission of the American Secretary of State, Mr. Powell, and his well-known strength of conviction would lead Israel to apply resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) and thus to conform to the requirements of international law. In resolution 1403 (2002) the Council did indeed express satisfaction at Mr. Powell's mission and even encouraged it.

Unfortunately, despite all his efforts — I must say, in very good faith — we are bound to recognize that the American Secretary of State obtained no precise commitment from the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Sharon — no commitment to send the Israeli intervention and repression forces back to their bases.

I do not intend here to enter into a debate on the degree of success or failure that can be attributed to Mr. Powell. It is enough to note that action taken by the greatest Power in the world, with the support of the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, had no impact on Israel. Is such a snub to the whole world acceptable? Is it acceptable to continue to maintain the siege of the offices of President Arafat, without the minimum facilities necessary? Is it acceptable to humiliate President Arafat to that point, and through him, all Palestinians? Is it possible to ignore the hand of peace that the Arabs held out to Israel at the recent Beirut summit? How does Israel expect to live and prosper in the Middle East while scorning the whole of its Arab environment?

A failure of the Powell mission means a failure of peace and a failure of justice. It is a failure on the part of the international community. It means a loss of credibility for the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace.

One of the foremost armies of the world has been unleased since last 29 March and like a tidal wave has carried away everything in its path — houses, infrastructure, schools, hospitals. Hundreds of persons have been buried under the ruins, to the extent that United Nations officials — when only yesterday they were able to get to the Jenin camp — stated that they felt as if they were in a city hit by an earthquake. How can the representatives of Israel deny what the whole world can see on the television?

Bulldozers are only just starting to clear away tons of debris and to collect bodies. Throughout all these recent days humanitarian assistance has been unable to get through to Palestinian cities, and this includes ambulances and doctors. We have seen scenes where doctors, including foreign doctors, were fighting with soldiers to get through checkpoints and to bring assistance to the wounded. It is a long time since we have seen such scenes.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the initiative launched by the Secretary-General in Geneva, which he explained this morning to the Security Council. It is a matter of urgency that we provide all possible resources to bring assistance to the people of Palestine, people who lack everything — water, food, clothing. It is urgent that we care for the wounded. Not to do that today — immediately, now — would be to become guilty of failure to bring assistance to persons in danger, and this, for jurists, is considered a crime.

We must gather together all resources for assistance and provide ourselves with the means to bring those resources to the people for whom they are intended. Of course, this action will have no meaning unless we put a stop to the infernal cycle of violence, killing and destruction. It is true that the situation on the ground is such that only an interposition force — whatever we decide to call it — will be in a position today to calm the situation while tending the wounds of the victims.

It is quite obvious that the situation in Palestine today is a threat to international peace, because the whole Middle East region is in danger of catching fire from it. It was in this context that the Secretary-General proposed that a multinational force be sent on the basis of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. In Chapter VII, as everybody knows, there is Article 40, which deals with provisional measures intended to prevent aggravation of a situation. I quote:

> "Such provisional measures shall be without prejudice to the rights, claims or position of the parties concerned. The Security Council shall duly take account of failure to comply with such provisional measures."

Today there is urgency; there is a threat to the peace, and there is a need to adopt provisional measures.

We are persuaded that the crisis of confidence that today prevails in Israeli-Palestinian relations necessitates more than ever the intervention of a third party to put things back to their original state and to open prospects for resumption of dialogue in the framework of a comprehensive peace programme.

Israel is acting to destroy the Palestinian Authority and perhaps to exclude Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority is its interlocutor, and today one cannot imagine any progress whatsoever that does not start with massive aid to reconstruct the Authority. But it is equally imperative to give back full freedom of movement to the legitimate President of the Palestinian Authority, President Yasser Arafat, so that he himself, and he alone, can conduct and guide the reconstruction process, organize the cooling-down and resume dialogue, with the assistance of an interposition force, if necessary.

This third party — it is, perhaps, preferable to speak of a third party, and of course we will leave it to the wisdom of the Council to decide what legal framework this third party will fit into ultimately — will perhaps impose nothing at all, but proceed — as has been done in many other disaster-stricken regions of the world — through mediation between the sides, conducted in the field, in order to induce them to work together to bring about the implementation of the objectives set by the international community.

The Kingdom of Morocco solemnly requests that the mass killings in Jenin be thoroughly investigated. The world must know. An impartial and unprejudiced inquiry must be carried out. At a time when the world is welcoming the entry into force of the Treaty creating the International Criminal Court, it would be beyond comprehension if an investigation were not undertaken to find out exactly what happened in Jenin and elsewhere in Palestine. Such an inquiry should not be conducted in haste, as the Secretary-General has said. It must involve impartial and competent experts working in an atmosphere of peace and calm. Israel, which touts its democratic system, is in duty bound to

accept this. Such an inquiry must be carried out, because what is at stake here is the entire ethical foundation and legal corpus on which our Organization is based.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, who heads the Al-Quds Committee, has indeed spared no effort over the last few weeks — first of all in Beirut, by taking an active part in the summit and in the adoption of the plan proposed by Prince Abdallah of Saudi Arabia; by receiving the American Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell; and by having a large number of contacts, during these past weeks, with all of those involved in this tragic situation. The goal is to prevent irreparable damage from being done, to lend tangible support to the innocent Palestinian victims, and finally to encourage peace initiatives. There are many peace initiatives, and it is up to the Council to synthesize them and to move forward, because the Council is not a deliberative body; it is an action-oriented body. That is what everyone expects of the Security Council.

The Kingdom of Morocco will continue to act in a constructive and responsible manner to see that justice is done for the people of Palestine and to enable them as soon as possible to live in peace, within their own state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Only in this way — and this has been said many times, Mr. President, but it must be reiterated, and we will reiterate it — will it be possible once and for all finally to put an end to the despair of an entire generation of Palestinians by giving them back land for peace. Only in this way will we be able to put an end to the violence resulting from such a situation. Violence cannot be stopped by violence.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to emphasize that, like many other delegations, the Algerian delegation has reached the point where it cannot but ask itself if yet another debate on the situation in the Palestinian territories, or even yet another resolution, could possibly have any meaning at all. This is because Israel's arrogance and contempt for the international community and for our Organization, coupled with its certainty of impunity, have seriously damaged the credibility of this important organ, which remains for us the sole and ultimate recourse for the maintenance of international peace and security, for ensuring respect for legality and for the protection of the most vulnerable.

In fact, all of the principles and values which the international community has painstakingly incorporated into its very fabric over the centuries, and which our Organization based itself on in 1945 in order to accompany humanity in its ongoing quest for law and justice, are today being seriously jeopardized by the activities of a State which, of its own initiative, has decided to flout the norms of international law and to ignore the resolutions of the very Organization that created it 54 years ago.

How else can we explain the fact that, almost two weeks after the Security Council urged it to withdraw without delay from the territories it had invaded, Israel has still not heeded that injunction, but has, in fact, intensified its campaign of aggression and terror against the Palestinian civilian population, multiplied its attacks and provocations, perpetrated the bloodiest massacres and trampled underfoot the most basic norms of international humanitarian law?

The unbearable images of death and devastation that have been shown on television screens throughout the world, and reports from those who have been able to penetrate inside the Jenin camp, graphically attest to the horror of the repression to which thousands of women and children have been subjected — forced to hide in terror for days, suffering from hunger and thirst, in the ruins of their houses, which were destroyed by rockets. This has been further illustrated by the appalling sight of hundreds of bodies strewn about the streets of Jenin or trapped in the ruins, unable to be reached by their families or by humanitarian organizations or given the decent burial to which they are entitled.

For a long time following the massacres committed in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and elsewhere throughout Palestine, the efforts of our Organization risk being perceived as slightly surrealistic or viewed with suspicion, especially in areas such as human rights, the combat against terrorism and the strengthening of international law, because there will remain the memory of our inability to prevent crimes against humanity from being committed before our very eyes.

Israel's practice of State terrorism and the war crimes that it has committed in full view of all —

almost live on our television screens — have now been compounded by our complicity in this crime against humanity, of which we all have been guilty since 29 March.

These massacres could have probably have been avoided had the Security Council accepted months ago to deploy an international force to protect the Palestinian civilian population. The proposal made to this effect a few days ago, and reiterated today by the Secretary-General, cannot but elicit the support of our delegation and of all those who are horrified by the barbarity displayed by the Israeli army in its attacks against the Palestinian civilian population. We hope that this time the Security Council will find ways and means to translate that proposal into reality as soon as possible and thus avert a repetition of the horrors of Jenin and Nablus.

Despite the multiplication and intensification of recent efforts, in particular American ones, which our Council has supported, to induce Israel to act in conformity with international legality, Israel continues to defy the international community. Confronted with this attitude, the Security Council must shoulder the burden of its responsibility. It must take a stance that is commensurate with the challenge it faces.

The Arab Group has undertaken, through a draft resolution, to propose a series of measures that it hopes the Security Council will adopt. All of these measures are based on respect for law and international legality and on the relevance of international humanitarian law, in particular of the Fourth Geneva Convention. They provide the international community and the Council with an unexpected opportunity to reverse the inadmissible undermining of the achievements recorded in terms of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Those achievements along with the credibility of international criminal law, now under development — can be restored only through an early and in-depth inquiry into the recent massacres committed in Palestine, and in Jenin in particular.

Moreover, in order to also ensure the protection of unarmed Palestinians, the media embargo imposed by the occupier's military censorship must be lifted. These conditions are vital to establishing the facts and to forging the conditions necessary to contribute to the resumption of the peace process. The deployment of an international force, as envisaged and recommended by the Secretary-General, must be decided upon with the utmost urgency.

Visiting the Jenin refugee camp today, the United Nations envoy, Mr. Roed-Larsen, said he was revolted by a situation "horrific beyond belief". This horror only makes more urgent the search for a just, comprehensive and final settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict, of which the Palestinian question is the Gordian knot.

The Beirut Arab initiative has defined the shape and content of such a settlement, based on international legality and the principle of exchanging land for peace. It is the conviction of Algeria, in solidarity today as in the past with the Palestinian people in their exemplary struggle for liberty and dignity, that only by meeting the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, and with Israel's full withdrawal from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967 will it be possible to restore peace, stability and security in this incredibly sensitive part of the world — the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to express our appreciation for the outstanding role you have assumed, Mr. President, in steering the work of the Security Council, given the very difficult circumstances in the Middle East. We appreciate your efforts in this area.

We had great hopes that the international community would be able to convince the Government of Israel to listen to the voice of reason and justice and fully implement Security Council resolutions through the complete and immediate withdrawal of its forces from the Palestinian territory and the end of crimes committed against the Palestinian people.

Regrettably, however, these efforts have not convinced Israel to comply with international demands to put an end to this crisis, the impact of which is causing it to escalate into a humanitarian crisis, the dimensions of which the world has never before witnessed.

As Israel implements its systematic policies of destroying the infrastructure of the occupied

Palestinian territories, killing innocent civilians, isolating the population and laying siege to it, as well as destroying all elements of life there, it justifies the maintenance of its security under the pretext of fighting terrorism, an international trend. Israel is condemning itself and its policies because it was Israel that planted and expanded terrorism in the region through policies of brutal repression and the use of undeterred force. Israel basically considers resistance to occupation a form of terrorism. What other occupation could be as cruel as the Israeli occupation? It produces in people hatred and anger. Hence, the natural and legitimate response of the repressed Palestinian people.

Kuwait strongly condemns the gross violations carried out by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, particularly in the Jenin refugee camp. Many news reports and reports of humanitarian organizations have informed us of the magnitude and brutality of the massacres that have been carried out by the Israeli security forces.

What makes us really sad and pained are the images of Palestinian children who are now experiencing the worst period of their lives. It is ironic that Israel intends to participate in the work of the upcoming special session of the General Assembly on children — Israel, whose record includes the killing of innocent children indiscriminately. In this connection, Kuwait calls upon the international community, through the Council, to make those responsible in the Israeli Government accountable for these crimes that contravene the most basic humanitarian values and principles and international humanitarian law.

Kuwait expresses its support for the demands of the Palestinian people and for the Council to continue to fulfil the responsibility entrusted to it by forcing Israel to immediately implement relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), and to lift the siege imposed by it against Palestinian towns and holy sites in them and against the legitimate leadership of the Palestinian people.

We take into account the proposals made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the Council today concerning the dispatch of a multinational force with the aim of restoring stability, protecting civilians and ensuring the implementation of resolutions of international legitimacy and the agreements signed between the two parties and the resumption of negotiations. Kuwait once again salutes this role assumed by the Secretary-General, and we encourage him to continue to carry it out.

We also welcome the efforts made by Secretary of State Colin Powell and the members of the "quartet". However, it is regrettable that the Israeli Government continues to reject all such efforts, thus causing their failure, and insists on destroying everything left in the occupied Palestinian territory. In this connection, we call upon the "quartet" and the international community to continue their efforts to pressure Israel to respect resolutions of international legitimacy.

In conclusion, we wish to draw the Council's attention to the fact that it is wrong to ignore the extreme anger of the Arabs. Peace in the region will be threatened if the Council continues to disregard this Arab rage.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank you, Sir, for your concern and for your prompt response to the call to convene this urgent meeting to consider the ongoing crisis and deteriorating situation in our region.

The Israeli escalation, reflected in acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and its National Authority, is an abhorrent and criminal act of hostility. We strongly renew our condemnation of this aggression and of the war crimes that have been committed. We remind the Israeli Government that its actions in the occupied Palestinian territories are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War, and of the resolutions of the Security Council. We condemn the killing and targeting of civilians on both sides. The time has come for the Israeli Government to realize that the military option will settle no crisis whatsoever. Escalation and violence will merely beget more violence and widen the chasm between the Israeli and Palestinian sides.

Jordan therefore reaffirms that the political option is the only way to overcome this crisis. We call on the Israeli Government to implement Security Council

resolution 1402 (2002), immediately and fully to withdraw its forces from the lands and cities it has reoccupied, and to lift the siege imposed on President Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian people, including on the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and all Palestinian cities and villages. We call on Israel to begin implementing the Tenet plan and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee towards a resumption of final status negotiations at the point at which they ended. In this regard, we cannot accept the convening of any international conference in the absence of President Yasser Arafat.

My delegation urges the dispatch of an international fact-finding commission in the light of statements made by the representatives of humanitarian agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental humanitarian organizations concerning the events that took place in the Jenin refugee camp and Israel's attempt to cover up the massacres there. My delegation supports the Secretary-General's statement on the need to dispatch a multinational force to the occupied Palestinian territories under Chapter VII of the Charter in order to create the environment necessary to opening the way to a political and diplomatic settlement.

We cannot fail at this point to convey our deep thanks to the Secretary-General and to the United States Secretary of State for their efforts to settle the crisis and to obtain an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories. My delegation renews its appeal to the Security Council to assume its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter by compelling Israel to implement its relevant resolutions, in particular resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002).

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates the solidarity of Jordan's King, Government and people with the elected, legitimate President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Yasser Arafat, and with our brethren the Palestinian people as they seek to obtain their legitimate rights and until their just national demands are met through the creation of their independent State on all their national territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Mongolia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): I would like to thank the Council for providing my delegation with the opportunity to contribute to this open debate of the Council.

At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to you, Sir, for the very timely consideration once again of this truly pressing and burning issue, with the widest participation of the membership of the United Nations.

My delegation would also like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his briefing of the Council on the situation in the Middle East, including on the grave humanitarian tragedy developing in the West Bank, especially at the Jenin refugee camp and some other populated areas.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by Ambassador Kumalo, Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. In addition, as a concerned Member of the United Nations, my delegation would like to make the following brief comments.

The long-standing Middle East crisis, and especially the latest Israeli and Palestinian conflict, constitute a serious threat not only to regional peace and stability, but equally to the cause of global peace and justice. Today, it is absolutely clear that continued use of military force is not only unhelpful, but, on the contrary, is further aggravating the situation and hurting the long-term solution of the Middle East problem. Mongolia reiterates its deepest concern over the serious deterioration of the situation there and the continued failure to fully comply with the Security Council resolutions that have been adopted.

Facing such an emergency situation, the international community has been seeking to find a productive and workable solution to end the present conflict. In the past few weeks, the Council, within its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has extensively debated this issue and adopted the important resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), as well as the presidential statement of 10 April, all of which Mongolia fully supports.

In our view, implementation of those resolutions would not only halt the escalation of violence. It could lead to conditions for the resumption of negotiations that would ensure the vision of two long-suffering

peoples living peacefully next to each other within safe and recognized borders. The new Saudi peace initiative would allow all States of the region to normalize Arab-Israeli relations, something which is of primary importance for regional peace, security, stability, mutual understanding and development. Mongolia supports the last week's joint Madrid statement of the "quartet" and appreciates Secretary of State Colin Powell's mission to the region and his bilateral meetings with the parties concerned, which were aimed at helping to stop the violence and to resume negotiations.

Immediate, more forceful measures need to be taken to avoid a repetition of the kind of humanitarian tragedies that the international community is all too familiar with. Therefore, in the face of the continued violence, my delegation welcomes the proposal of the Secretary-General, made to the Council earlier today: to establish, under Chapter VII of the Charter, an international presence on the ground by sending to the region a United-Nations-approved, impartial multinational force formed by a coalition of the willing. That would be a concrete, constructive step that might help end the spiral of violence and destruction, monitor the situation on the ground, lead to the gradual restoration of trust between the two sides and create an environment in which the parties concerned can resume the peaceful search for durable peace and justice on the basis of the various plans and the resolutions of the Council, all of which are well known to all. It is to be hoped that members of the Council will be able to respond expeditiously to the Secretary-General's proposal.

Allow me in conclusion to reiterate once again my delegation's hope that the Council's debate will lead to realistic, concrete measures to arrest the unfolding catastrophe in the Middle East and to resume steps aimed at promoting the long-awaited just, lasting and comprehensive solution in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): Mr. President, I thank you and the other members of the Security Council for convening this open debate.

The central question before us today is the same one we have been discussing over the past few months: In the face of the regrettable events in the Middle East, what more can we expect the Security Council to do to really assert its legitimate authority in dealing with this grave threat to international peace and security? We all agree that the record of Security Council initiatives in recent weeks has been impressive in comparison with the past practice of immobility and passivity. The Council has now listened to the general membership on several occasions: it has adopted resolution 1397 (2002), with a long-term vision for peace and stability in the region; it has adopted resolution 1402 (2002), with a checklist of steps to ensure a ceasefire and the resumption of the political talks; and it has adopted resolution 1403 (2002), calling for an immediate withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Force from Palestinian areas and backing the efforts that the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Powell, was about to launch with his visit to the region.

But the situation we face now represents a negation of every single action taken by the Security Council. The unfolding crisis has deteriorated even further and resistance to comply with Security Council decisions seems to be even more adamant. Instead of withdrawing from Palestinian areas illegally occupied, Israel has escalated its military offensive. We are appalled by the human toll of these actions and by reports of alleged atrocities that cannot be investigated because all the areas affected, such as the refugee camp in Jenin, were kept out of bounds as the destruction continued. We are distressed at the material loss and the suffering inflicted on innocent civilians.

We fail to understand what the Israeli leadership really wants to achieve with these actions. But we know that this is surely not the road to peace. And we all agree with Secretary-General Kofi Annan that the right of self-defence does not mean a blank cheque for aggression. The international community is outraged by the persistent denial of access by providers of humanitarian assistance to the areas recently invaded. And it simply cannot tolerate a fact-finding mission mandated by the Commission on Human Rights not taking place simply because Israel decides that it is "inopportune". Israel must allow full freedom of movement for humanitarian agencies in the Palestinian territories, in compliance with universally adopted human rights provisions and principles of international humanitarian law.

The United Nations as a whole has a responsibility to lay down a clear strategy to halt the

humanitarian catastrophe that continues to unfold in the occupied territories and to establish a clear path towards rekindling our hope for peace. Illegal occupation, lack of respect for human rights and denial of the right of self-determination are at the root of the crisis in the Middle East, and those problems must be addressed within a comprehensive strategy.

The search for a solution cannot be left entirely in the hands of the two parties, as they seem to have been dragged to the point where if left to themselves they will never be able to restore mutual trust, which is a requirement for the construction of a solid peace process.

Once again we condemn all acts of violence and the killing of innocent civilians, including the repulsive resort to suicidal bombings as a means to advance any legitimate political cause. We also condemn the destruction caused by the disproportionate use of force and persistent attempts to demoralize and humiliate the Palestinian people and its leadership. Neither side can take the high moral ground when acts of violence are at issue. Violence and intolerance cannot prevail over reason and truth.

We only hope that both Israeli and Palestinian leaders will soon realize that their own peoples are on the brink of exhaustion. Working for peace and reconciliation requires a great deal of courage: not exactly the same kind of courage needed to fight a war, but rather the courage of statesmanship and the ability to overcome intolerance and plant the seeds of a better live for all.

The international community can certainly help, and it must continue to offer its unfailing contribution in order to push ahead the peace negotiations. We want the Oslo process to resume from where it was left off so many months ago. But it is ultimately up to the Israeli and the Palestinian leaders to accept the simple fact that they are bound to live together, that no military solution can be imposed to end the conflict and that they must return to the negotiating table. We earnestly expect that they will finally give peace a chance. But that will take place only if there is a total pull-out from the occupied Palestinian cities and a resolute decision by both parties to contain and lower the level of violence, aggression and provocation.

At this very crucial moment, we all look to the Security Council and ask a very legitimate question: What can the Security Council do, and what will it do next? Can it stand by silently or passively as its repeated calls remain unheard, as its authority continues to be challenged and as those engaged in mediation efforts fully backed by the Council come away empty-handed? Brazil welcomes the progressive engagement of the Security Council in this question, and we strongly encourage the Council to move towards active involvement on the ground with full use of the instruments at its disposal.

We fully agree that an effective international presence in Palestine is immediately required. We think it is of the utmost importance to monitor directly on the ground the grave human rights and humanitarian situation. We support the idea of a credible international mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan. We encourage the Security Council to consider sending a mission to the region. We favour the establishment in due course of a multinational force mandated by the Council to ensure that the parties observe a ceasefire and any other agreements that may be reached between them.

We fully agree that an effective international presence in Palestine is required immediately. We think it is of the utmost importance to monitor directly, on the ground, the grave human rights and humanitarian situation. We support the idea of a credible international mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan. We encourage the Security Council to consider sending a mission to the region. We favour the establishment in due course of a multinational force mandated by the Council to ensure that the parties observe a ceasefire and any other agreements that they may reach. We encourage the Council to develop a clear strategy to set in motion a negotiating process on the basis of the proposal made by Crown Prince Abdullah, recently endorsed by the League of Arab States.

We also want to express our full appreciation of the efforts personally deployed by Secretary of State Colin Powell, whose dedication to peace has always been a important factor in the entire region.

Finally, I want to reaffirm the message, conveyed time and again by the Brazilian authorities, including at the highest level, of our strong support of the Security Council and of all initiatives aimed at ensuring a ceasefire and at resuming the political process towards

a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question. We are certainly prepared to offer our active cooperation in any action that the Council and the international community deem useful in pursuance of those objectives.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, for the third time in the month of April, I must thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting of the Security Council in response to the growing call of the immense majority of the Member States of the United Nations, who are concerned by the continuing deterioration and worsening of the crisis in the Middle East, especially in Palestine.

As we waited with great patience for the long-hoped for initiative of the United States Secretary of State in the Middle East, the massacres and repression perpetrated against the Palestinians continued. These have been 10 extremely long days. The long delay in the trip from Washington to Ramallah had nothing to do with the technologically advanced modes of transportation that are used nowadays. Nor was it related to any threats to the security of the distinguished traveller. This procrastination did not augur well, and the final outcome comes as no surprise. The initiative of the Secretary of State has been a resounding failure.

But, let us be frank. Was it possible to expect any other outcome? Of course not. All of us here know that very well. The text of the joint declaration by the Secretary-General, the European Union, the United States and the Russian Federation was not applied.

Mr. Powell said at a press conference, just before returning to his country, that he was disappointed with President Arafat, who, in his opinion, could do more because the time had come for him to adopt "a strategic decision". Sentences such as this will be recorded in the history of contemporary shamefulness.

I should like to ask, who should be disappointed with whom? Can we be disappointed with the actions of President Arafat? What we have seen over the past few days and what has been said in recent debates in the Council indicate several things. The heroic resistance of the Palestinian people against the illegal Israeli occupier remains firm despite the hundreds of dead — which they are not allowed even to count — accumulating in the towns and refugee camps.

The example of President Arafat, harassed, besieged, deprived of water and electricity, with barely any means of communication with the outside world and confronted by the tanks and bulldozers demolishing the Palestinian Authority's headquarters in Ramallah, constitutes vivid testimony that he continues to adhere to his ideals and that, although the Secretary of State pretends not to realize it, President Arafat and the Palestinian people elected many years ago their own strategic option: to fight for the right to self-determination and to create their own independent, sovereign State in their own territories, with its capital in East Jerusalem.

The immediate ceasefire demanded in recent resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), continues to be flouted with total impunity. The withdrawal of Israeli troops from the scant number of Palestinian areas that enjoyed limited autonomy is a fluctuating phenomenon and not at all permanent: the Israeli army withdraws then returns to the cities, towns and refugee camps.

What should we do now? Should we sit quietly and wait patiently for the Secretary of State to find time in his busy schedule to return to the region? How many Palestinian and Israeli civilians must die before United States strategists feel like taking another look at events in the Middle East and try again to take us for fools with their supposed mediation of scant credibility? Can it be that the Government of the only surviving superpower of our times does not have the necessary mechanisms to "persuade" — to use the same word used by the State Department — its closest ally in the Middle East to comply with the demands of the Security Council, which it apparently voted in favour of in our presence?

There is only one word for this: complicity. It is enough to glance at the messages that we receive from the White House, repeating ad nauseam the same unbalanced refrain: the Palestinians must do more; the Palestinians must condemn terrorism; the Palestinians must give up their aspirations; the Palestinians...et cetera. Always repeating the same thing to avoid the truth.

My delegation comes here today to denounce the immorality and the double standards of American

foreign policy. We do this on the basis of the strength and the moral virtue we possess as victims even now of direct aggression of all types. Could the Government of the United States suspend sending the latest generation of weapons to the Israeli army, which uses them against a defenceless, civilian population? The answer is no. Could the Government of the United States apply unilateral, coercive, economic measures and sanctions against the Government of Israel until it decides finally to comply with the many resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, which it flouts and tramples on with complete contempt? Of course not. Could the Government of the United States vote in the Security Council in favour of sanctions, restrictions, limitations and penalties against the Government of Israel, as it has done with boundless enthusiasm against other countries whose Governments it does not happen to like? Obviously not.

Could the Government of the United States decide to put an immediate end to the tremendous economic subsidies that it provides year after year to maintain Israel's exaggerated military apparatus, which is used in its attacks of aggression and repression against the neighbouring Arab countries and against the civil Palestinian population? Of course not.

Could the Government of the United States muster some courage and truly believe in its self-assigned role as the global champion of democracy and human rights, and propose in this organization resolutions condemning the Israeli authorities for their contempt for the most fundamental human rights of the Arab and Palestinian populations, including the right to life? No, no, no.

The Council has held countless meetings, with innumerable hours of denunciations and condemnations, and death and horror continue to prevail in the Palestinian territories flagrantly occupied by Israel. Nothing has been resolved. Israel suffers from a type of deafness that seems irreversible, and it scoffs at whatever we say and propose here.

Perhaps a solution would be to stop talking to the puppet and demand more of the puppetmaster. The unlimited protection granted to Israel by the United States must cease. The atrocities committed by Israel with the consent of the United States must cease. The human rights violations perpetrated by Israel and tolerated by the United States must be rejected and punished in a way that sets an example. The violations of temples of various faiths by Israeli military troops must come to a complete end. We cannot allow the Council's credibility to remain hostage to the designs of one of its members, no matter how powerful and predominant it may be, protected by the immoral weapon of the veto.

A few days ago, we appealed in this forum for hypocrisy and diplomatic formalism to be set aside. We cannot wait any longer to act effectively and swiftly. We have had enough imposition of criteria that reality has revealed as ridiculous. We must stop equating an oppressive and occupying army with a heroic people struggling for freedom and dignity. Cuba will continue tirelessly to denounce all these manipulations and distortions, all these crimes and this genocide being perpetrated before our very eyes against the Arab peoples, in particular the Palestinian people. Cuba will continue to denounce, with force and conviction, violations of resolutions, of Charter precepts, of international law and of international humanitarian law.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zainuddin (Malaysia): My delegation wishes first of all to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to continue consideration of the extremely grave situation in Palestine.

My delegation is deeply dismayed at Israel's absolute disregard of repeated calls by the international community to immediately withdraw from Palestinian territories. Israel's belligerence towards the Council's resolutions, particularly resolution 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), is evidence of its determination to obliterate the Palestinian people. The recent events in Jenin, which have had appalling consequences for the lives and property of the Palestinian population, demonstrate Israel's disrespect for international law and international humanitarian law. The assault on the refugee camp resulted in an estimated death toll of 100 to 200 Palestinians. Helicopter gunships fired at the camp and bulldozers knocked down houses, some of them with their occupants still inside. Not even United Nations facilities were spared.

In this regard, we welcome the decision to send a fact-finding mission to the occupied territories, to be led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to investigate and report on human

rights violations by the Israeli forces. We hope that the mission will be undertaken without delay. Israel's procrastination in allowing the fact-finding mission to proceed immediately speaks for itself. One can surmise that Israel is concealing the true gravity of the appalling consequences of its actions.

My delegation strongly believes that immediate measures must be taken to address the appalling humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories. As we speak, the Palestinian population remains at risk and continues to suffer human rights violations at the hands of Israel. For the Palestinians, the Israeli actions have led to a near-paralysis of life in all its aspects. Mr. Kofi Annan has stated that Israeli forces have widely flouted international humanitarian principles and human rights standards. Mr. Roed-Larsen, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, has emphasized that there exists a humanitarian imperative on the ground requiring every possible action to save lives, and he has demanded that Israel fulfil its obligations under international law in that regard. We hope that Israel will come to its senses and heed the call to cooperate with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

There has been no improvement in the situation in Palestine. While Israeli forces might have withdrawn from some areas of the occupied territories, the curfews enforced by sniper fire remain in effect, preventing Palestinians from leaving their homes to get food or medical help. Palestinians are being rounded up for questioning. The civilian casualties and the destruction continue unabated. Mr. Arafat remains under siege in the Palestinian Authority's headquarters in Ramallah and is seriously restricted in his ability to lead his people and contain the violence. Great damage has been done to the Palestinian Authority and its institutions, weakening its capacity to provide basic services to the population. These deplorable conditions caused by Israel are pulling the parties further apart and away from the negotiating table. They present major obstacles to peace, to which Israel claims to aspire.

In our last statement before the Council on this issue, my delegation welcomed the peace mission of United States Secretary of State Colin Powell, hoping that his efforts would result in a ceasefire and would lead the parties to resume negotiations on a lasting solution to the problem. On the contrary, with absolute disregard for the efforts of its closest ally, Israel continues to pursue its military operations in the Palestinian territories. In fact, as the peace mission ended, Israel swept into two more Palestinian villages. Clearly, the mission did not achieve the ceasefire and the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) for which the international community had hoped. Secretary Powell himself noted that Mr. Sharon still planned to raid Palestinian territories if he deemed it necessary. There has not been the slightest show of a cessation of hostilities by Israel. With the failure of Secretary Powell's mission, Israel will continue to have a free hand to do as it pleases.

With regard to the international peace conference proposed by Mr. Sharon, my delegation finds it inconceivable that such a conference should exclude the participation of Mr. Arafat, a principal actor in the peace process and the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people. That proposal is a non-starter. It reflects Israel's insincerity about wanting a peaceful solution to this problem.

Malaysia continues to hold the belief that what is urgently needed to stop the violence is for the Council to urgently authorize the dispatch of a United Nations or international peacekeeping force to the occupied territories. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's call for the creation of a third-party mechanism in the form of a multinational peacekeeping force as the only means to end the bloodshed. The peacekeeping force would be able to stabilize the situation on the ground and pave the way for the resumption of negotiations. We fully agree that the force would have to be strong enough to render ineffective any challenge to its authority. In view of the serious present and potential dangers to the civilian population of the current escalation of violence, we urge the Council to take immediate action to dispatch an international peacekeeping force to the occupied territories.

My delegation fears that the worst is yet to come for the Palestinians. We strongly urge the Council to do all it can to protect the Palestinian civilian population and to end the hostilities in the region. It is also my delegation's earnest hope that the "quartet" and the United Nations will continue to undertake further initiatives and will play a prominent role in striving to bring lasting peace to the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting to discuss the ever-deteriorating situation in the occupied territories, to which, most regrettably, no immediate end seems to be in sight.

In the past few weeks, the Council has adopted three resolutions and one presidential statement, but to no avail. The crisis continues unabated. In fact, with each passing day it is worsening. Its reverberations are being felt in the region and beyond; the consequences of this could be unimaginable.

The military action of Israel, which continues notwithstanding the Security Council resolutions and the calls and appeals by the international community to cease those operations and withdraw, are a cause of acute concern to all of us. As recent events have demonstrated, it has neither enhanced Israel's security nor served the cause of peace. If anything, it has only created more impediments to the collective quest for a lasting peace in the Middle East. The continued military operations by Israel and its acts of retaliatory violence serve no purpose except to cause loss of life, mostly of innocent civilians, including women and children, and to make the divide between the peoples of Israel and of Palestine ever wider. Immediate cessation of military operations and withdrawal by Israel and a ceasefire are therefore the most urgent steps. These brook no delay, as the price is being paid by the innocent on both sides quite needlessly.

Violence witnessed in Israel and Jerusalem through horrific suicide bombings carried out by Palestinian militants against civilians cannot be justified on any ground and should end forthwith. In this context, we have noted the 13 April statement, in Arabic, by President Arafat condemning acts of terrorism in all its manifestations.

From all accounts, some parts of the occupied territories face a serious humanitarian crisis, over which Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the entire international community have expressed their deep distress and anguish. The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Peter Hansen, and the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator, Terje Roed-Larsen, have termed the situation in the Jenin refugee camp as horrific. We believe that there can be no justification for causing such an acute crisis, not even the right of self-defence. Innocent civilian lives are sacrosanct, no matter where and no matter whose. Due respect for international humanitarian law should be the norm of conduct. Humanitarian agencies should be allowed full access, in compliance with international humanitarian principles.

With each passing day we are moving inexorably away from the vision of Israel and Palestine living peacefully as two States, side by side, within secure and recognized boundaries. We therefore call for an immediate end to violence and for the resumption of dialogue. Peace can be crafted only at the negotiating table and not on the treads of tanks. Resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) provide the road map. The required will to move on the path charted in those resolutions must be demonstrated.

India's support for the Palestinian cause has been consistent, strong and unwavering. We have stood and continue to stand by the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve their legitimate national rights, which are the key to peace and stability in the Middle East. India is in constant contact with several Arab countries on this issue. We stand ready to do whatever we can to bring peace to the region.

We support the 10 April Madrid joint statement by the "quartet". Much hope had been pinned on the efforts of the "quartet" as well as on those efforts undertaken bilaterally. But we have yet to see any meaningful progress on the urgently required steps. However, the international community cannot give up. On the contrary, efforts have to be redoubled.

In a recent communication to President Arafat, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee reiterated that India considers President Arafat as a symbol of the aspirations and the struggle of Palestinian people. As we have stressed in earlier statements, we are concerned at the restrictions imposed on President Arafat, who is the democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people. For the international community as well as for the Palestinian people, President Arafat is the embodiment of Palestinian nationhood. Now, and in the near future, President Arafat has an important role to play. We fully share the international community's concern about his health and well-being. India's leadership has conveyed to Israel that by isolating

President Arafat, it was compounding difficulties rather than lessening them, making the task of peace that much more difficult.

In line with the "quartet" statement of 10 April, we believe that Israel must immediately halt its military operations; bring about an immediate and meaningful ceasefire; withdraw immediately in full, including from Ramallah and from President Arafat's headquarters; allow full and unimpeded humanitarian access; refrain from the excessive use of force; and ensure the protection of civilians.

A number of ideas have been proposed. We urge you, Sir, to work closely with the leadership of Palestine and Israel to craft workable solutions to steer the region out of the present imbroglio and to realize our collective vision of a lasting peace in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Mr. President, even as we meet right now, a humanitarian tragedy of immense magnitude is unfolding in the West Bank. The continued perpetration of Israeli atrocities is compounding the pains of Palestine. These are now beyond bearable proportions.

United States Secretary of State Colin Powell has completed a crucial mission to the region. He has undertaken a massive effort to de-escalate a dangerous situation. We are, therefore, deeply indebted to him. No endeavour, such as his, made in genuine earnestness, is ever in vain. It has already sharpened international focus on the need to remain engaged in the pursuit of peace.

We now see it as the Council's responsibility to complement these initiatives as well as to support the Secretary-General's proposal. The latter has called for the deployment of a multinational force. It seems to us that we no longer have the luxury of choice or options. It is imperative that the Council endorse the idea and authorize the force.

The robustness of the mandate must match the challenges on the ground. Time is of the essence. Any delay could lead to horrific consequences.

It is not just a moral imperative on the part of the Council to ensure that its resolutions are complied with. It is also a practical one. The Council has not only to be credible, it must also be seen to be credible. Should there be discrepancy between its word and deed, its capacity to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter could begin to erode. This cannot be to anyone's benefit, now or in the future. The perception of the Council as the guardian of peace is a sine qua non for the United Nations to be viewed as a guarantor of a better world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): For the fourth time in the course of a short, yet tragic period fraught with killing and destruction and drenched in blood, the Arab Group along with other good people, has requested the convening of an open meeting of the Security Council concerning the Palestinian question.

But after all we have seen, heard and read, what can we say to the Security Council? The Security Council is supposed to act spontaneously, without request from anyone, to deal with blatant violations of the Charter and with threats to international peace and security.

Should we speak of the magnitude of the crimes perpetrated on the land of Palestine against the Palestinian people? Or should we speak of the nature of those crimes? Should we speak of crimes of genocide, or war crimes, or crimes against humanity, or aggression, or should we speak of all of them together? Should we speak of violations of the Charter, of international humanitarian law and of international law in general? Or should we speak of the political dimensions of such crimes?

What has long been taking place is a blatant violation of all moral values, of all laws, of all customs and all covenants. The Security Council has unfortunately been unable to take account of all these violations in its resolutions to date.

Here, in this forum of the Organization to which we all belong, we cannot but wonder: Is it not time for the Council to rise to the level of the events, to the level of the dangers threatening Palestine, the region and the entire world? Is it not time for the Council to hear the moans of the thousands of wounded and the screams of mothers and of children, of those in

Palestine who have lost everything, save their dream and their hope?

Is it not time for the Council to impose respect for the Charter, without any selectivity or double standards, and to punish those who violate the Charter, be they great or small — particularly the rogue Zionist entity, the oppressive Zionist entity?

Is it not time for the Security Council to speak the truth and not to consider the perpetrator and the victims as equal? Is it not time for the Council to impose respect for international legitimacy embodied in resolutions that the Council itself has adopted concerning the Palestinian question?

We also wonder, what are the real demands of the Palestinian people? Are they illegitimate demands? Are they against international law or against the Charter of the United Nations? Or are they, in fact, legitimate demands?

All the Palestinian people want is to recover their land that has been usurped and to defend their dignity, their sovereignty and their right to establish their independent State on their land in accordance with the rules of international law. But it would seem that those who struggle to recover their rights, particularly their rights to freedom and to self-determination, are labelled "terrorists" by some — by those who attempt to overturn the principles that are internationally accepted in order to justify their policies of hegemony and aggression.

We all have to admit and recognize that the Security Council has been so far unable to stand on the side of right in this just cause because of a prior threat by one single State to resort to the veto even before studying the Arab draft resolution, which is already weak enough.

What is happening in the Council, unfortunately, is not an application of the rules of law or the rules of justice and peace. It is, rather, a reflection of the principle of the rule of force, a principle that is rejected under the Charter. It is an imposition of ready-made recipes that reflect and express the interests of a very small number of States.

What is happening in Palestine — killing, destruction, siege, starvation, terror, violation of the dignity of holy sites — represents, according to all divine and human laws, a complex crime. It is indeed a crime of genocide, a crime against humanity and a war crime the likes of which humanity has never before seen, even in the time of the Tartars and the Nazis.

The Arab people in Iraq and in all other Arab States are witnessing the events in Palestine with heavy hearts and pain at seeing the years of persecution to which our people in the occupied Palestinian territories have been subjected by the occupation forces. Anyone observing the events could not but be amazed, for the Zionist entity has not hesitated to perpetrate any and all acts against innocent civilians, destroying, killing, expelling and humiliating them within the framework of a well-known, organized policy, and in so doing defying one and all, including the members of the Council.

The position of the United States of America has encouraged, and continues to encourage, Israel in the pursuit of that policy. The United States has to date not condemned what has taken place. This makes it incumbent on the international community to demand that those criminals be brought to justice for all the crimes they have perpetrated. In Jenin, in Ramallah, in Nablus, in the Church of the Nativity of Jesus Christ — may the peace of God be upon Him — the occupation forces have had no respect for the religious feelings of hundreds of millions of Muslims and Christians all over the globe.

Where are the Charter-mandated instruments to deter all those who violate the rules of international law? Where is the embargo? Where are the economic sanctions? Where are the other coercive measures? Are they to be used against some and not against others? It would seem that a decision has been taken in advance, as usual, to exempt those forces from international law and from the provisions of the Charter. This jeopardizes the credibility of the Security Council, and future generations will see what is happening now as a shameful event in the history of the United Nations.

The thoughts and hearts of the Iraqi people are with our brothers in the occupied territories, and the Iraqi people, who are suffering from the consequences of an unjust embargo, have insisted on sparing no effort in helping to put an end to this tragedy. Among other things, they have made the decision to stop exporting oil to those who have supported, and continue to support, the Zionist entity in its aggression against, and occupation of, the Palestinian territories. They are committed to drawing attention to the horror of the tragedy suffered by the Palestinian people and to help

them in their resolve, despite Iraq's own, well-known need for resources.

However loud the voices of hypocrisy and however persuasive the false concepts they espouse, the voices of truth and right will not be overcome. Those who defend their land against occupation are not terrorists. They are acting in accordance with the rules of international law. The international community cannot continue to accept this doublespeak, which is being used to justify aggressive policies that have recently been revealed clearly and in no uncertain terms, to the extent that the threat of force has been used against particular States — including my country, Iraq — in order to turn the world's attention away from the heinous crimes being perpetrated in the occupied Palestinian territories, and in an open and blatant attempt to terrorize States and to shirk the responsibility of abiding by international commitments to respect and implement international law.

Finally, I am certain that we all are aware that the reason for the suffering of the Palestinian people in particular and the Arab region in general is the Zionist occupation, which has resulted in continuous, decades-long suffering and in the events we have been witnessing over the past 20 days. Consequently, all attempts to find an equitable solution to the just Palestinian cause cannot be successful unless we put an end to this hateful occupation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Manis (Sudan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: We are meeting here today once again to consider the tragic deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, due to the refusal by Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions, which call upon it to withdraw from the town of Ramallah and other Palestinian towns. Israel's reaction was to respond to the Council's resolutions with increased repression and by surrounding the Church of the Nativity.

My delegation would like to begin by thanking Secretary-General Kofi Annan and by expressing our appreciation for his tireless efforts to put an end to the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories following Israel's aggression. His most recent effort was the earlier statement he made to the Council. My delegation supports his proposal calling for the dispatch of a multinational force to Palestine, in the hope that it will receive support and be implemented rapidly by the Council in its quest to maintain international peace and security.

We join our voice to those of all who have asked for an international inquiry into the war crimes carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian civilians, first and foremost with respect to the crime of genocide perpetrated in the Jenin camp. We all heard the statement that Mr. Roed-Larsen, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative in the Middle East, made to the press following his visit to the Jenin camp, in which he described the destruction of the Jenin camp as unimaginable and the situation created by the Israeli forces in the camp as a disaster "horrifying beyond belief". The Secretary-General referred to this in his statement to the Council today.

On television we have seen doctors warn that there are people beneath the ruins who are slowly suffocating because the occupation authorities refuse to help them. Dead bodies are lying all over the camp, which could spread disease. Such a crime against humanity should not go unpunished by the international community. The same can be said about the criminals, who should not go unpunished.

We have reaffirmed in previous statements to the Council that the Council must act quickly to impose compliance with its resolutions. We reaffirm our appeal today, particularly following the failure of all diplomatic efforts, to bring pressure to bear on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories. The Council must assume its responsibility and compel Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to apply it in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Council must also bring pressure to bear on Israel to cease preventing the transfer of the wounded and the provision of medical and humanitarian assistance to the victims of daily bombings.

The Israeli occupation forces act as if they were above the law and above United Nations resolutions. This is encouraged by the fact that the Security Council has not taken punitive action under Chapter VII of the Charter against the war crimes, the State terrorism and the genocide of Palestinian civilians. That is why Israel continues its policy of aggression and threatens peace

and stability in the region. I repeat, that is why the Council must assume its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is also important that Israel immediately implement Council resolutions and cease its aggression against the Palestinian people. Otherwise, the Council will have proved itself able to impose sanctions only on weak and vulnerable States, and will thus have lost its credibility.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Palestinian question is now at a very serious stage when its negative effects may spread beyond the occupied Palestinian territories. That is the aim of the Israeli Government, which is attempting to propel the Middle East into bloody chaos following the heinous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces in the Jenin camp in Nablus and in other occupied areas. We have seen mass killings in cold blood, extrajudicial executions, the destruction of homes on top of their inhabitants, widespread arrests, robbery and looting, and the systematic destruction of the infrastructure, the superstructure and the foundations of the Palestinian State, along with Israel's attempts to transform the Palestinian areas into clusters of backward people, stripped of their history, heritage and culture.

The Israeli Prime Minister, who has stated his regret at not having killed Chairman Yasser Arafat when Israeli forces stormed Lebanon in 1982, has also stated his regret at having promised the President of the United States not to kill the Palestinian President when his forces stormed the Palestinian areas in 2002. That very Prime Minister claims that the attack by Israeli forces and the siege of the occupied Palestinian areas are aimed at ending Palestinian resistance, which he labelled as terrorism. Popular nationalist struggle is not terrorism. It is indeed a right and a duty that has been exercised by all States that have been colonized; through their popular nationalist resistance they have been able to liberate themselves from colonization and to gain freedom and independence.

How can the Israeli Prime Minister continue to seek to put an end to the Palestinian popular resistance, when this has failed to achieve the security he has promised? The only thing he has succeeded in doing is spreading death and destruction, using State terrorism as a means of terrorizing not only the Palestinians, but also the Arabs, under the pretext of carrying out preventive terrorism to stop the Palestinians from undertaking guerrilla operations and from using violence against the Israelis.

The Israeli Prime Minister has stopped at nothing to close off the horizons of peace, beginning with his storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, insisting on expanding and increasing the number of Israeli settlements, destroying homes and fields, preventing Palestinians from working, laying siege to them and causing hunger, arbitrary killing and physical liquidation.

The Israeli Government has made a point of destroying the very foundations of the Palestinian State. It has destroyed the airport and the maritime port in the Gaza Strip. It has closed off the safe passage that links the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It has bombarded Palestinian television and broadcasting stations. It has attacked the Palestinian ministries and governmental departments, confiscating all information and statistics. It has bombarded the power stations and water pipes. It has refused to pay the Palestinians due compensation to the tune of approximately $2 billion.

No sooner had the Israeli Prime Minister assumed office than he began to implement his own personal agenda, destroying the headquarters of the Palestinian security forces, which he considered to be the very arm of terrorism, and the Palestinian preventive forces, killing or expelling many of their members. The widespread destruction of the Palestinian refugee camps and the massacres unleashed therein are attempts to obviate the problem of the refugees in any final settlement which may be reached through negotiation.

How can shedding Palestinian blood and strewing the streets with the bodies of Palestinian victims or burying them in a cemetery they have called the "enemy graveyard" put an end to violence or to Palestinian resistance? Will the Palestinians be able to forget their kin who have bled to death beneath the rubble or others who have been buried alive? Did the massacres of Deir Yassin and elsewhere persuade the Palestinians to abandon their legitimate rights or to surrender to the precepts of certain Israelis based on a culture of murder, colonization, occupation and expulsion? Did the massacres perpetrated by the Israeli

Prime Minister in Sabra and Shatila lead to the submission of the Palestinians or their acceptance of occupation and humiliation?

The horrible crimes of the Israeli occupation forces, leaving Palestinian wounded to bleed to death, not only are among the most horrendous and sadistic of war crimes, but indeed represent a plan to humiliate the Arabs and the Palestinians and to compel them to seek vengeance in order to quash any idea or hope of peace they may have entertained.

Israel's practices, heinous crimes and genuine terrorism in the occupied Palestinian territories should be condemned. They demonstrate to the entire world that Israel's claim to want peace is false and that it continues to flout its commitments. The Israeli aggression has even targeted those who have sought refuge in mosques, churches and refugee camps. It is inspiring Palestinian youths to sacrifice their very lives in defence of their shrines, their land and their dignity. Israel is working not for the security and peace of its citizens, but to consecrate its colonization and to maintain its hold on the usurped Palestinian and Arab territories. It is practising brazen official terrorism before the entire international community.

If Israel's acts of aggression in Lebanon and Tunisia and the Mossad operations against Palestinian activists inside and outside the occupied territories do not constitute terrorism, then what does? If such savage Israeli practices against the Palestinian people are not blatant violations of every covenant, rule and law, then what is terrorism? If the siege of Palestinian cities and towns, the arrest of the Palestinian leadership and the attacks and massacres in the refugee camps are not terrorism, then what is? Such Israeli practices should be considered war crimes and crimes against humanity; they fully justify the prosecution of their perpetrators.

Israel's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978), 1322 (2000), 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) reflects its contempt for international legitimacy. It also demonstrates its failure to heed the joint statement made in Madrid on 10 April 2002 and to respect the international community's appeals. This requires us to pressure Israel to implement Security Council resolutions, beginning with immediate withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories and the lifting of the siege of Chairman Arafat, the legitimate, elected President of the Palestinian Authority.

Our delegation fully supports the statement made by the Secretary-General concerning the need for the international community to assume its responsibility to halt the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and to protect the lives that are being destroyed every day. We agree with him that the matter cannot be addressed solely as a problem of security, and that any political settlement must secure the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and peace and security for all the peoples and States of the region. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to send international forces to the region to work with the parties concerned to halt the spiral of violence, to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territories and to create the stable climate necessary for resuming the negotiations and for achieving a just and comprehensive political settlement.

In light of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's full and consistent respect for a just and comprehensive peace and for regional security and stability, Crown Prince Abdullah, the son of King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, submitted the peace initiative adopted at the Arab summit, which made it a pan-Arab initiative. The Governments of various States, with the exception of the current Israeli Government, have welcomed the initiative. The Security Council also welcomed it because it is in keeping with international legitimacy and represents a rational way to stop the daily massacres in Palestinian territory and to rescue the region from the spiral of violence. We look forward to all the parties concerned adopting that worthy initiative and respecting it with a view to ensuring peace, security, stability, cooperation and prosperity for all.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank you most sincerely, Sir, for your work at the helm of the Council this month and for your rapid response to the request of the Arab Group to convene a meeting on the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel. As the President of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, my country understands the importance of holding such frequent meetings on an urgent basis. We all understand the dangerous nature of the situation in the Palestinian territories since Israel's most recent campaign of force

and the eruption of chaos caused by its invasion of occupied Palestinian territories.

Television networks and independent press reports have provided coverage of the situation in the occupied Arab territories, which offers clear evidence of the heinous acts carried out by the Israeli troops. These acts are not in keeping with the conduct of a modern, civilized country and a Member of the United Nations. In recent days, Israeli troops have savagely pursued their operation to liquidate the Palestinian population, particularly in the Jenin refugee camp, where Israeli forces are doing everything possible to hide the inhuman nature of their crimes. However, coming days will reveal the true scale of the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces, crimes which are added to the others that Israel has perpetrated since its creation. Such Israeli acts constitute State terrorism designed to eliminate the presence of Palestine and Palestinians. They are war crimes against innocent civilians and a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949.

My delegation calls upon the Security Council to compel Israel to comply with Security Council resolutions, particularly the recent resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). Israel must end its occupation of the occupied Arab territories in general and the occupied Palestinian territories in particular. The efforts of the Secretary-General and of the United States Secretary of State are praiseworthy because they are intended to bridge the differences in the viewpoints of the parties. An international force should be dispatched in order to protect Palestinian civilians.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of United Arab Emirates. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting to consider once again ways of dealing with the serious war of occupation and genocide, which continues unabated, perpetrated by the Israeli occupying force in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Despite the frequent emergency meetings convened by the Security Council during the past few weeks and despite the important resolutions adopted, the wording of which was guided by the British and United States delegations, and notwithstanding the appeals and statements of international and regional bodies, including the recent Madrid statement by the "quartet", which have unanimously called upon Israel to cease its military hostilities and to withdraw without delay from all Palestinian towns, villages and camps which it had reoccupied, we have regrettably continued to witness the flagrant Israeli defiance of all those resolutions, efforts and appeals. Still worse, that defiance grew even worse when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, his Defence Minister and his generals ordered the Israeli army to continue the siege of the Church of the Nativity and of the Palestinian Authority headquarters and to continue the persecution, detention or killing of most of the Palestinian people's iconic leaders and representatives. They also ordered horrendous massacres against Palestinians, regardless of sex, age or religion.

The Israeli occupying forces' killings, premeditated and brutal executions and destruction of houses, with women and children inside, in the camps of Jenin and Nablus constitute but one of the many chapters in the history of the criminal acts perpetrated by the Zionist war criminal, Ariel Sharon, which began with the massacres he committed before and after the 1967 war, and continued with the carnage at Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon in 1982 and the more recent carnage committed in Palestinian cities and villages before the eyes of the Security Council and the world public, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949, relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

The United Arab Emirates had placed great hope on the success of the mission of the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell, to the region to deter the Sharon Government from committing further human rights violations, to bring the Israelis back to the negotiating table and to compel them to implement resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). We were distressed at the disappointing failure of the mission, which was due to Israeli intransigence, to the Israeli refusal to implement the Council's resolutions or to withdraw, and to its ignoring of the statements by the "quartet" and, especially, by President Bush, whose country is the principal co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process. We believe that constitutes the most serious blow ever dealt to efforts to solve the Palestinian issue and to establish an independent

Palestinian State, without which there can be no lasting, fair and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We strongly condemn the policy of double standards employed by some members of the Security Council, in particular the United States, with respect to the acts committed by the Israeli Government, which have constituted a serious and systematic violation of the national and human rights of the Palestinian people and of their holy places and their cultural, historical and economic institutions since the brave Palestinian uprising began in October 2000. We consider that it is time for those influential Council members to reread their resolutions. That would help the Security Council truly to fulfil its role and would enable the Council to take measures under Chapter VII of the Charter to ensure Israel's compliance with international resolutions, to ensure its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from all the Palestinian territories that it has reoccupied, including Ramallah and Bethlehem, and to remove the harsh and humiliating siege of the headquarters and institutions of the Palestinian Authority and of all Palestinian towns and cities. It should also stop blocking access by relief agencies, ambulances and international supplies of food and medicines, which are not reaching thousands of victims.

We would welcome a Security Council initiative to establish a multinational force to be dispatched to the Palestinian territories. It is of great importance that the United Nations shoulder its responsibility to establish and dispatch such a force immediately to protect the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people from the genocide which the Israeli army has been conducting against them. The United Nations should also demand the implementation of international instruments such as the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949.

We call on the Security Council to send a fact-finding mission to investigate the crimes committed by Israeli forces, especially in Jenin and Nablus. Some of these brutal crimes have recently been disclosed in reports and declarations of Mrs. Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, of Mr. Richard Cook, the Director of Operations for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and of representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, relief organizations and the world media, despite Israeli Government efforts to hide the facts by burying hundreds of corpses of Palestinians killed, maimed and burned by the Israeli army.

In these extraordinary circumstances, the United Arab Emirates renews its full support for all forms of struggle by the Palestinian people, who have suffered continuously since the Zionist occupation of their territories in 1948. We call on the international community, particularly the Security Council and members of the "quartet", to increase political, economic and financial support for the Palestinian people, to secure the withdrawal of the unjust Israeli occupation and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, foremost of which its right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

We renew our call for transparency in positions on the Palestinian issue that are consistent with equality and justice among nations and peoples. We should make a clear distinction between the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to resist Israeli occupation and the policy of State terrorism carried out by the Israeli Government.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of United Arab Emirates for his statement, and I invite him to resume the seat reserved for him in the Council Chamber.

The next speaker is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for once again giving me the opportunity to take the floor before the Council on this topic.

The Council has already laid down fundamental conditions that are necessary to help the parties to draw back. The international community has spoken unanimously, yet the conflict continues, the number of victims continues to grow and the hopes for a lasting peace are receding. Proposals to end the violence and to establish a transition to peace are not in short supply. They vary in details, which are important, but all of them are based on the principle of land for peace, referred to in Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). These resolutions provide for two States living side by side in peace and security, a vision that is shared by all. It is obvious that the two sides cannot realize this vision on their own.

(*spoke in English*)

That vision can only be made a reality by the full and active participation of the international community, including on the ground. This conflict has implications that go well beyond the Middle East, and the Secretary-General has offered a bold and courageous view of the way ahead. He understands that any solution will require the sustained involvement of parties from both inside and outside the region.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the time has come to consider how we can collectively help the parties call a halt to the fighting once and for all. It is past time for all concerned to put the protection of the Israeli and the Palestinian people at the centre of their calculations and to do whatever it takes to bring about the peace those people so desperately want and need.

The current situation cannot continue. The dreadful loss of life on both sides, the humanitarian suffering and, most fundamentally, the destruction of hope — all must stop. Horrific suicide bombings and the devastation we have witnessed in Jenin and elsewhere lead only deeper into the vortex of hate and fear and despair.

The Government of Canada believes that the way out of the descent into oblivion does exist. It exists in Council resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). It exists in the unique authority of the Secretary-General. It exists in the unique power of the Government of the United States united behind its Secretary of State. It exists in the constructive engagement of the countries in the region, including through the plan put forth by Saudi Arabia and adopted by the Arab League. It exists in the efforts of the wider international community represented in this institution. Taken together, the components of peace are almost all there.

Canada has been urging the parties to take the steps necessary to create an environment where a third-party presence could play a constructive role. With experience in every peacekeeping operation in the region since the start of the conflict, Canada believes that such a presence would help the situation. As Prime Minister Chrétien recently stated, "If asked, Canada is prepared to participate in such a presence." Canada welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals, and we look forward to studying them in more detail.

So the components of peace exist, or almost exist. What is lacking is a demonstrable commitment to peace from both sides. We call on Israel and the Palestinians to comply with resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). Israel must immediately end the destruction of Palestinian civil infrastructure, withdraw its forces from the West Bank and cease all settlement building. The Palestinian Authority and Chairman Arafat must denounce, prevent and punish terrorism directed at the innocent. Let us be clear that the aspiration of a Palestinian State, an aspiration that Canada supports, will never be achieved through suicide bombings of the innocent.

Next, I wish to address the unacceptable humanitarian situation. The Council has adopted two resolutions on protecting civilians in armed conflict: 1265 (1999) and 1296 (2000). Those resolutions, and the action they envisaged, are not elective prescriptions to be observed or ignored according to the convenience of the protagonists. They are not mere guidelines; they clearly and forcefully remind States of their obligations under international law, notably under the Geneva Conventions.

Canada calls on the parties to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law. To the Palestinians, we reiterate our condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of attacks on civilians, including suicide bombing attacks. They are violations of international law, they are morally repugnant and they are strategically self-defeating. To Israel, we say that it, too, has an obligation to respect civilians and that it must refrain from indiscriminate attacks that harm civilians.

Israel has particular responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Canada calls on the Government of Israel to ensure that the Israeli Defence Force cooperates with international organizations in dealing with the situation on the ground, including in Jenin, and fulfil its obligations under international law to provide — or to allow others to provide — food, water and other humanitarian assistance to the suffering, including the residents of Jenin. International organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross must be granted full and unhindered access to the camps and to the detainees. Curfews must be lifted so that the humanitarian organizations can effectively carry out the crucial job that needs to be done. We applaud the dedication of human rights and humanitarian organization workers as they

courageously carry out their jobs. Today, Canada announced an additional $8 million in humanitarian assistance.

We are also concerned about the ongoing situation in Bethlehem at the Church of the Nativity, and we call on the two sides to avoid further needless casualties there.

Finally, we call upon the leaders of both sides to make the indispensable strategic decision for peace. Their peoples will bear the tragic consequences if they do not.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haneda (Japan): Since the Security Council met for its open debate on this item last week, there have been various international efforts to improve the situation in the Middle East, the most important of which was the visit of United States Secretary of State Colin Powell. We support and appreciate the efforts he made with both parties to establish a ceasefire under extremely difficult conditions. While the cycle of violence seems to have eased, at least for the time being, the situation on the ground unfortunately shows little sign of improvement. Many Palestinian and Israeli casualties have been reported since the Council's last open debate.

We are especially concerned at the humanitarian situation in Palestinian cities. According to the United Nations relief mission dispatched to the Jenin camp two days ago, the situation there is catastrophic, with people in desperate need of food and water. In his statement before the Council this morning, Secretary-General Kofi Annan quoted United Nations staff members who described the situation as horrific. The Government of Japan calls upon Israel to grant international humanitarian agencies full and free access to Palestinian cities so that they can carry out their activities. Moreover, we hope that the visit to the region by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, will take place as planned.

Efforts to restore calm to the situation must continue. Secretary of State Powell made it clear that the United States would continue working for the realization of a ceasefire. The Government of Japan strongly supports the continued engagement by the United States and will extend all possible cooperation to its efforts. In that connection, the Government of Japan urges both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to respond positively to the efforts of the United States, and to take decisive action to bring about a ceasefire and to resume the peace process.

We call once again upon both parties immediately to implement relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1402 (2002). We urge Israel to withdraw its troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, where the headquarters of Chairman Arafat are located. Holding Chairman Arafat, the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, under siege is counterproductive and must be ended at once. We note the anti-terrorism statement made by Chairman Arafat last Sunday. We sincerely hope that it will be followed through with concrete action.

The situation along the Blue Line is another area of concern. The Government of Japan calls on all parties to respect the Blue Line and to show the utmost restraint to avoid an escalation of violence in that area.

Various constructive ideas and initiatives to promote peace have been put forward, including the proposal that the Secretary-General presented to the Council this morning. The international community should continue to discuss those ideas and initiatives with a view to improving the situation. Japan, for its part, is determined to extend all possible assistance to such efforts.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): The Security Council has convened an open debate on this item for the third time during this month of April, which attests to the gravity of the situation on the ground in the occupied territories. In a mere matter of weeks, the Security Council has adopted three resolutions on this matter — 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) — but those resolutions remain unimplemented by Israel, and the conflict has worsened, resulting in unimaginable consequences for the Palestinian people and threatening the stability and security of the entire Middle East region.

We learn with mounting horror of reports emerging from the Jenin refugee camp concerning the massacre of large numbers of civilians, with monumental destruction inflicted on their lands. The first eyewitness accounts given by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Roed-Larsen, reflect the scope of the truly devastating humanitarian catastrophe that took place in Jenin.

In this regard, we strongly urge Israel immediately to fulfil the three requirements put forth by the Special Coordinator: to lift the curfew immediately, to expand the assistance provided by the Israeli forces to humanitarian workers with regard to equipment and security liaison, and to facilitate the delivery of water and food supplies to the needy population. As in any conflict situation, a civilized nation must comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law and must allow humanitarian agencies to have access to the suffering. We therefore demand that Israel do so promptly.

Furthermore, the sieges and the incursions into Palestinian towns, which have continued unabated, must cease forthwith. At this moment, Israeli policies of aggression have contributed nothing whatsoever to ensuring security; rather, they have created insecurity for Israel itself, for the Palestinians and for the other peoples of the region: that aggression is now threatening to embroil the neighbouring region by fuelling deep feelings of anger, mistrust and frustration over the carnage wrought by Israel on the Palestinian people and Israel's utter disregard of the condemnation issued by the international community.

In light of the above, my delegation cannot but underscore the imperative need to deploy an international force on the ground, under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Finally, it bears reiterating that a military solution cannot resolve this crisis. On the contrary, acts of aggression have demonstrated tragic results: indiscriminate killing, wanton destruction of property and deep entrenchment of the suffering of the Palestinian people, already under 35 years of occupation. A way out through this quagmire can be found following Israel's complete and immediate withdrawal from all Palestinian occupied territories. It is only then that a diplomatic and political solution can be reached, within the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace — the underpinning of the Madrid Peace Conference. Only then can the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side become a reality.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Iran): I thank you, Sir, for having convened another public meeting on the grave situation in the Palestinian territories.

"Horrendous" and "horrific" are common adjectives used by emergency workers and media representatives to describe the situation in Jenin and some other towns in the West Bank in the wake of atrocities committed by the Israeli army. Mr. Roed-Larsen, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process described the devastation left by Israelis in Jenin as being "horrific beyond belief". Given the extent of the devastation they caused, it was all the more criminal and indicative of criminal intent to deny rescue and emergency teams full access to the area for 11 full days. It is now becoming more and more clear that, as an independent forensic expert with Amnesty International has said, a massacre took place in Jenin. In this context, it is morally repugnant to call the main criminal figure behind these crimes a man of peace and still boast about conducting a value-based foreign policy.

Based on the information that has emerged thus far, there is no doubt that the code of conduct in war and international humanitarian law are being blatantly violated. There should be no doubt either that those who are behind the devastation and massacre in Jenin are war criminals and should not be allowed to go unpunished. Those who may stand in the way of bringing the criminals to justice obstruct justice, and history will remember them as accomplices in the aggression.

There can be no justification at all for subjecting a whole civilian and defenceless population to a collective punishment in the severest possible form. The victims of the barbaric crimes in the Jenin refugee camp and elsewhere were already scarred and ravaged by decades-old humiliation and occupation of their lands by the Israelis. Their only guilt was to resist the

will of the occupying and aggressive Power, as all other peoples throughout history have done.

The pictures depicting atrocities committed by the Israelis in the occupied Palestinian land, which have been beamed into the living-rooms of people across the globe, have outraged world public opinion. Those vested interests that advocate and relay, here and there, official Israeli propaganda will only influence a few like-minded, malevolent persons or deceive some naive people.

In Afghanistan, the international community had to deal with just two groups, namely the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, which had virtually occupied Afghanistan, repressing the Afghan people and turning Afghan territory into a launching pad for terrorist acts. They had nothing to do with the Afghan people and were resolutely opposed by them from the beginning. However, in Palestine a whole nation has either been forced to live in exile or has been taken hostage by the Israelis and systematically brutalized for decades. Those Afghans who fought the occupation in the 1980s were dubbed freedom fighters and assisted by the international community. Similarly, those who now continue to fight an inherently comparable occupation in the Middle East are freedom fighters and obviously not terrorists, and should be assisted by the international community too.

What is happening in Jenin and elsewhere in Palestine is part of a well-planned scheme by the Israelis. Having dropped the empty pretence of seeking peace that they had maintained for several years, they are now engaged in systematically tearing down Palestinian institutional capacity. They are destroying Palestinian political and economic institutions with a view to taking them back to square one and undoing the process of empowerment they had embarked on. It is cynical that they reduce the Palestinian security agencies to ruins and place their architect, Mr. Arafat, under house arrest, on the one hand, and expect them to stop violence, on the other.

In light of what happened recently in the occupied territories, it is all the more incumbent upon the international community, represented by the Council, to take effective measures with a view to stopping for good Israeli atrocities. With this objective in mind, the Council should, first of all, put an end to the contempt shown by the Israeli regime for Security Council resolutions, thereby eroding their authority. Now, weeks after the adoption of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), the Israelis continue to flout them.

Secondly, an international commission of inquiry should be established and mandated to look into what happened in Jenin and elsewhere. It is essential that those who ordered and actually committed war crimes against civilians be brought to justice. The Council has already done so in the cases of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Why should not it be done in the case of Palestine?

Thirdly, a multinational force to be stationed on Palestinian territory is long overdue. Such a force, if mandated and deployed beforehand, could have averted recent violence and saved many human lives. Given the circumstances, an armed multinational force mandated to enforce the Council's decisions is a must, and any hesitation on the part of the Council on this issue will lead to more bloodshed on the ground. Given the intransigency and contempt increasingly shown by the Israelis, we believe that resolute action by the Council under Chapter VII the Charter is now more necessary than ever.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kim Young-mok (Republic of Korea): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this open debate on the critical situation in the Middle East.

In our previous statement in this Chamber last week, my delegation joined other Members of the United Nations in urging the participants immediately to put an end to the violence and to move promptly to dialogue and negotiations for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Today my delegation reiterates the same call to the leaders of the two parties.

My delegation welcomes the increased engagement on the part of the international community, in particular the visit of United States Secretary of State Colin Powell to the region and the efforts of the "quartet". We hope that these efforts will help turn the vicious circle of violence into a meaningful ceasefire and dialogue.

At this stage, my delegation's utmost concern is the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the

Palestinian territories, particularly in the Jenin refugee camp. The current situation is deplorable. Under no circumstance can one justify the excessive use of force or the extra-judicial treatment of civilians. In addition, international humanitarian workers should be guaranteed full access to provide needed relief to the affected area and to the civilians therein.

In this context, the Republic of Korea calls on the responsible parties to respect international humanitarian law and to exercise maximum restraint. We also call for the full and immediate implementation of Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), in particular the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities.

My delegation commends the Secretary-General's devotion and continuous efforts to bring peace to the region. We share his view that, under these circumstances there is a pressing need for effective means to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions and other peace initiatives. We believe that his proposal this morning to send a multinational force to the region merits serious and careful consideration by all States Members of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again, an open meeting of the Security Council has been convened to deal with the situation resulting from Israel's reoccupation of Palestinian territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority, in blatant violation of the agreements it has signed with the Palestinian Authority and with the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Yasser Arafat.

The repetition of such meetings reflects the inability of the Security Council to assume its responsibilities with respect to the situation in the Middle East. Why is that? How can there be further hesitation or manoeuvring when we see the destruction and killings that have taken place in the Jenin camp and in the occupied towns and villages, and when we witness the crimes that have been committed against civilians — women, children and the elderly alike.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which, like the rest of the international community, had hoped that the Madrid statement made by the "quartet" would lead to a positive outcome and that the mission of Secretary of State Colin Powell would succeed, wishes to condemn Israel's actions — the massacres, the destruction, the savage and unjustified aggression against the Palestinian — and calls on the Security Council to adopt the following measures.

First, the Security Council should send an international mission of inquiry to the Palestinian territories, in particular to Jenin, to ascertain the facts.

Secondly, it should enforce immediate respect for Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), thereby ensuring the full and unconditional withdrawal of the Israelis from the occupied Palestinian territories, with a view to enabling the resumption of the peace process on the basis of the outcome of the Madrid Conference and of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Thirdly, the Council must ensure access by humanitarian organizations, so that they can carry out their activities without hindrance.

Fourthly, it must send an international force to protect the unarmed Palestinian people.

Fifthly, the Council must hasten to lift the siege on President Arafat's headquarters, in order to enable him to resume his work in service of the Palestinian people and of peace, which he has always striven to achieve.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker is the representative of Oman. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Sameen (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to express to you personally and to all the other members of the Council our thanks for your prompt response to the request submitted by the Arab Group for holding this emergency meeting to discuss the tragic and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

For more than a month now, the Council has been meeting almost constantly to consider the deteriorating situation in the occupied Arab territories. In fact, the Council has adopted several resolutions calling on

Israel to institute a ceasefire and to withdraw without delay its forces from the Palestinian territories that they have reoccupied.

Regrettably, however, Israel has to date failed to comply with those resolutions or to respond to those calls. Quite the opposite — according to what we are learning from the media and from reports about the activities of the Israeli army, it has wrought additional destruction and stepped up its military campaign against Palestinian territories and towns. Nor has Israel responded to the repeated calls of international humanitarian organizations to allow them to bury the dead or help the wounded. That is the situation today, and that is Israel's response to the Council's resolutions.

Faced with such a situation, we wonder, as the entire world does, about the next step the Council must take and whether it will continue to monitor the situation and endeavour every now and then to adopt a resolution that condemns and deplores. In accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter, the Council must shoulder those responsibilities and deal firmly and seriously with a State that has totally ignored Security Council resolutions and that is acting as if it were above the law.

We fully appreciate the political and moral responsibility borne by the Council, and we consider that every member of the Council will be responsible to history itself, bearing in mind the mandate with which the Council has been entrusted by the States Members of the United Nations: to act on their behalf to maintain international peace and security. This requires that the Council adopt practical measures to make Israel comply with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is indeed tragic. This has been recognized by the United Nations through its specialized agencies operating in the field. Consequently, we call upon the co-sponsors of the peace process and upon the Security Council to counter the State terrorism being carried out by the Israeli occupation forces, which have defied all appeals, demands and resolutions of the Security Council, and to put an end to the liquidation of the Palestinian people. In that regard, we remind the Security Council that it is important for it to shoulder its responsibility and approve the immediate dispatch of an international mission to investigate the crimes committed by the Israeli army, which certainly should be considered to be genocide and crimes against humanity, crimes which Israel is strenuously trying to cover up.

What is happening today in Jenin, Bethlehem, Tulkarem and Nablus closely resembles what took place in the so-called safe havens in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as Goradze, Srebrenica, Tuzla and other areas that were victimized by a group that had no respect whatsoever for international legitimacy, a group that believed only in murder and oppression as a means of settling conflicts. We call on the Council to adopt the measures necessary to avert humanitarian catastrophes in other areas.

Our delegation expresses its amazement that some circles are calling upon the besieged Palestinian President, who is within range of Israeli tanks and cannons, to put an end to so-called terrorist acts and to call the Palestinians to a ceasefire. Indeed, this raises questions. Are those who are making such calls not Israelis? Such notions will undoubtedly provide Israel with additional pretexts to pursue its criminal acts against the Palestinian people and its blatant violation of international norms and agreements.

Without going into further detail concerning the very serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which our delegation has covered in previous meetings, I would like, in conclusion, to express our appreciation and support for the Secretary-General's proposal concerning the immediate dispatch of a multinational force to the occupied territories to stop further deterioration, to monitor a ceasefire and to guarantee Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories, which would lead to the establishment of a climate favourable to the resumption of negotiations. At the same time, we stress the need for the Council to adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter, as it has done in other situations with which it dealt in a serious manner.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Still inscribed on my list are the members of the Security Council. I will suspend the meeting now until tomorrow morning. At a delegation's request, we will hold consultations at 10 a.m. This meeting will be resumed as soon as they have concluded.

The meeting was suspended at 7.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4515 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4515th meeting

Friday, 19 April 2002, 10.45 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 17 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/431).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-34201 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 10.45 a.m.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The international community has recently made efforts to halt further escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as demonstrated by the three Security Council resolutions and the statement by the "quartet". Additionally, United States Secretary of State Powell went to the region to carry out mediation activities. Many countries, including China, have in their own fashion called on the parties to implement the Council's resolutions.

However, to our regret, there has not been any satisfactory change in developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Israeli army still refuses to withdraw and has intensified its siege of the Palestinian leader, Mr. Arafat, and of the Church of the Nativity. Bloodshed among innocent civilians continues.

The immediate withdrawal of troops by Israel is the deciding factor that will determine whether there can be a real change of course in the conflict. We support all efforts urging Israel to withdraw its troops.

The escalation of violent activities has created an extremely grave humanitarian situation. We find Israelis and Palestinians, as well as Chinese nationals, among the victims of the suicide bombs. Such acts of violence must be condemned. However, to the world's great dismay, the humanitarian tragedy caused by the Israeli army's brutal military attacks continues. We favour an investigation of the humanitarian situation in Palestine, particularly of what has actually occurred in the Jenin refugee camps. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has already adopted a resolution on this issue and has created an inquiry commission. We call upon Israel and Palestine to assist the work of that group. We express our deep concern at the plight of the Palestinian civilians. We call upon the international community to increase its humanitarian assistance. We call upon Israel to provide assistance and to facilitate the work carried out by international humanitarian relief agencies.

The international community has reached agreement that third-party involvement is necessary to end the vicious cycle of violence. We appreciate and support the efforts made in this regard by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. Yesterday, he put forward a proposal for the deployment of a multinational force. China will thoroughly study that proposal. We hope that Israel, Palestine and the international community will respond positively and constructively to the Secretary-General's proposal and will establish without delay a third-party mechanism to create conditions favourable to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Despite the strong resolutions recently adopted by the Council and the numerous efforts at mediation, the situation in the Middle East continues to deteriorate. The international community is a helpless witness to the dangerous escalation of violence in the region.

The Israeli army's powerful offensive in Palestinian cities has sown desolation among the besieged population, leaving in its wake destruction, arrests and violations of international humanitarian principles. The operation is characterized by the ongoing siege of President Arafat's headquarters, which has deprived him of his means to act.

As we have often said, the use of force is a source of frustration and will never resolve the problem of violence. Indeed, the more stubbornly the Israeli Defence Forces persist in their policy of occupation, the more intensely they fan the flames of hatred and violence. The logical consequence of such conduct is an increase in the number of suicide bomb attacks against innocent Israelis. These attacks, which are politically and morally unjustifiable, are in themselves detrimental to the search for a political solution to the conflict. Worse than escalation, the current situation is a tragedy that the international community must try to resolve by every means available to it.

During his briefing to the Council yesterday, Secretary-General Kofi Annan shared his comprehensive vision for confronting the dangerous situation developing in the Middle East and, above all, for finding a definitive solution to the conflict. He recommended, inter alia, that the international community consider taking new measures that are bolder than those attempted to date. In that connection, my delegation supports his proposal to deploy a multinational force within the framework of a proactive policy to protect human life, guarantee security in the region and preserve the opportunity to relaunch the political process.

My delegation feels that if this deployment, which the international community has called for so

often, had been accepted sooner, it might have prevented the cycle of violence committed by all sides that continues to unfold and thus the humanitarian tragedy that has occurred in the Jenin refugee camp. We are convinced that, if such a multinational force is to be deployed, important prerequisites must be met, in particular cooperation from both parties in establishing the best possible chances for an immediate ceasefire, thereby ensuring the success of the operation. In any case, the Security Council, acting in accordance with its Charter mandate, has all the powers necessary to implement this initiative.

As the Secretary-General said recently, efforts to calm the crisis and to achieve a ceasefire must be accompanied by action on the political front. In adopting resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), the Security Council has clearly defined the lineaments of the peace process for the Israelis and Palestinians, in particular, and for the Middle East in general. Our difficult task is therefore to persuade the parties to renounce the logic of war and their present policies, which are destructive and barren. The parties must demonstrate the political will to return to the negotiating table. That is the sole condition that can ensure security for Israel and the achievement of the legitimate political aspirations of the Palestinians.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the efforts undertaken by the various mediators will not be in vain and that the parties will heed the many appeals that have been made for talks to resume with a view to achieving a fair and definitive peace. The Israeli and Palestinian peoples, the main victims of the conflict, truly need that peace.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): Bulgaria is deeply concerned about the very serious situation in the Middle East and appeals for an immediate ceasefire. Of greatest concern to us today is undoubtedly the humanitarian situation.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General spoke to us about the situation in Jenin. My country fully shares his concerns. It is urgent that humanitarian organizations be given access to Jenin so that human lives may be saved. We reaffirm the absolute necessity of Israel's withdrawing from the occupied territories and ending the isolation of President Yasser Arafat. In that perspective, we note the beginnings of a withdrawal, which we ascribe to a large extent to the ongoing commitment of the United States and the other members of the "quartet" to the mediation efforts, in particular the mission of United States Secretary of State Powell to the region.

The destruction of Palestinian infrastructure in no way contributes to solving existing problems because it does not allow moderate elements on the Palestinian side to control terrorist organizations. We expect the Palestinian Authority to commit itself fully to putting an end to acts of terrorism against Israel and to dismantling terrorist networks. Bulgaria appeals to all countries in the Middle East to work actively to prevent acts of terrorism, which seriously obstruct every effort of the international community to resolve the crisis.

As I have already had occasion to say, my country welcomes the statement issued in Madrid by the "quartet". A positive atmosphere has emerged in the international community, in which a unity of opinions prevails as to what should be done in the Middle East. One of the most positive elements is the ongoing commitment of the Government of the United States to a search for a solution to the crisis.

My country is ready to support any peace initiative that can contribute to the establishment of a just and lasting peace. We played an active part in the drafting of resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). We believe that Security Council resolutions provide an excellent basis for the efforts of the international community. From that perspective, we do not feel it to be the right time to vote on yet another resolution, because practically everything has already been said in the resolutions I have mentioned. We do not feel that a new resolution could add any positive elements to those already in place. We do not need any verbal inflation. What we really seek is the actual implementation of the existing resolutions.

On another occasion, my country will comment in detail on the very important proposals made by the Secretary-General in the Council yesterday concerning the dispatch of a force to the Middle East. I must say, however, that my country believes that deploying any force in the region should be an integral part of the international community's efforts and of a political process.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutu (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Cameroon is grateful to you, Mr. President, for having accepted the request of the Arab Group urgently to convene a Security Council

meeting to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

That question, which is at the centre of the Israeli-Arab conflict, spanned the twentieth century, unfortunately without a solution being found. However, the Organization, through the Security Council, has envisaged a lasting settlement of that conflict. That is the purpose of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and, recently, 1397 (2002). Those resolutions are the foundation for the political settlement; they are also the expression of the principle of land for peace.

Thus the objective to be attained is well known and the path for reaching it has been laid out. What we need today is political will — a political will that is strong and clear. It is because such political will has been lacking, and is still lacking, and because the parties have had scant interest in respecting the Council's resolutions, that the settlement of the Palestinian question has been slow to emerge.

The spiral of violence is expanding, and, in the face of that growth, there is great risk that discouragement will triumph. Over the past months and days, the escalation of violence has been particularly dangerous — so many deaths, so much suffering and destruction. It is truly a tragedy. In the light of those conditions, we understand the great hope raised by recent initiatives and decisions aimed at ending the violence and relaunching the peace process: resolution 1397 (2002), envisioning two States, Israeli and Palestinian, living side by side within secure and recognized borders; the peace initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah; the diplomatic actions in the field by the "quartet"; and the recent mission of the United States Secretary of State to the Middle East.

On 18 April the Secretary-General submitted to the Council and defended a new proposal for action by the international community to achieve peace in the Middle East, peace that — one cannot fail to repeat — must be based on settlement of the central question of Palestine. The Secretary-General proposed the deployment of a multinational force in the region. That force, which would not be a United Nations force, would be approved and authorized by the Council within the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter. As the Secretary-General informed the Council, it would pursue a quadruple objective: ending the cycle of Israeli-Palestinian violence, creating conditions for the resumption of normal activities in the Palestinian territories, re-establishing the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, and facilitating the resumption of negotiations on a political settlement of the entire Middle East crisis. Once it was made public, the proposal gave rise, not to opposition as such, but rather to a series of questions and reactions aimed at mastering its details. Over the course of negotiations in the coming days, we hope to see such questions and reactions smoothed out.

Cameroon believes that this multinational force can be deployed without waiting for the parties' full support. However, if it is to fulfil its mission, it must enjoy and be assured of the full cooperation of all parties. The evidence of such cooperation on the part of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority, as well as of other parties directly interested and concerned, would be a sign of their will to commit to the peace process, in which political and security considerations predominate.

Therefore, the Secretary-General's proposal, in our view, is an essential contribution in the search for a way to restore confidence between Israelis and Palestinians. Such confidence would assist in the resumption of negotiations towards peace. Only negotiations — no other type of action — can lead to peace. Any other kind of solution that the parties might wish to undertake, any other option that the parties might resort to can only lead to a nightmare or apocalypse — such an apocalypse as has been proclaimed so many times in that land holy to three faiths. But if there were such an apocalypse, it would not make any distinction between the winners and the losers, between these people and those people. We have caught a glimpse of this in the escalation of Israeli military violence and the multiplication of Palestinian suicide attacks.

It is for all these reasons that Cameroon shares the global vision of the Secretary-General. Confronted with the worsening situation, the lack of trust, the hatred that is developing, the language we hear from both parties — which is increasingly war-like and not peaceful — all of this means that the parties will not be able to find their way to the negotiating table by themselves. Hence, there is a need for action by a third party.

Not so long ago, when Cameroon proposed that a Security Council mission be sent to the field, we spoke about the need to apply electroshock therapy to the

situation. The multinational force, whose mandate has been sketched out, we feel is the solution towards which we should strive. This is a win-win situation. Israel would win, and the Palestine Authority and Palestine would win, too. The international community and the region would also win, and, above all, peace would win — peace in people's hearts, peace in their minds and, finally, protection for men, women and children.

The search for peace, we feel, should be the guiding line when we examine the Secretary-General's proposal. It is the search for peace that can bring us together to find rapidly the right shape and form for the multinational force.

This is an emergency. The situation is a tragedy. The credibility of the Security Council is at stake. Let's make a decision. Let's make a decision to help the Council emerge from what the other day I called the "deafening silence" of its resolutions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully endorses the statement made by the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the European Union. The continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is tragic. The humanitarian situation and the suffering of the people in the Palestinian territories are intolerable. Civilians are paying for the present murderous blockade with their lives, and this must urgently stop.

The international community, especially the Security Council that represents it, has even set a very clear framework to get us off this devastating treadmill. Specific demands have been placed on the parties by the Council in resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), and in the Presidential statement dated 10 April 2002. That statement endorsed the Madrid statement made by the "quartet", composed of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United States Secretary of State, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the High Representative of the European Union. France rejects any sequential or conditional reading of these decisions. They must be put into effect immediately and in their entirety.

Israel should immediately proceed to a complete withdrawal from reoccupied Palestinian towns and villages. Withdrawal of the Israeli army has been recorded in Jenin; now Israel must withdraw from other occupied towns and villages. In particular, Israel must lift the siege on the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and give back full freedom of movement to the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat.

On their side, the Palestinian Authority and the President of the Authority must do everything to take on their share of responsibility and meet their commitments. In particular, they must put an end to acts of violence and terrorist attacks. Such blind attacks against civilians are morally and politically unacceptable. That is the reason why France welcomes the statement made last Saturday by the President of the Palestinian Authority and his staff condemning terrorism, especially the most recent attack in Jerusalem.

Over and beyond declarations, France would like to recall that the Palestinian Authority and the President of the Authority can act only insofar as they are given the means to do so. The destruction of Palestinian infrastructure by the Israeli army is a political fault that brings with it very grave consequences. Once a ceasefire has been signed, it will be necessary to start reconstruction of those facilities with the assistance of the international community. There is no other way than the conclusion of a ceasefire and the resumption, without delay, of political negotiations on a final and just political settlement.

We all know the general shape of such a settlement: an end to Israeli occupation and the peaceful coexistence of two independent States, Israel and Palestine, living within safe and recognized frontiers. It is a delusion to believe that such a settlement can be concluded without Yasser Arafat; he continues to be the legitimate and elected representative of the Palestinian people.

France is greatly concerned by the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian population, who lives under a constant curfew and lockdown. France is particularly concerned by the precarious plight of the people inside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and in the Jenin refugee camp.

Israel must take all the necessary measures under international humanitarian law defined by the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians and foreign nationals, but also with regard to the treatment of detainees. Israel must

allow for the Palestinian population's immediate access to medical care and humanitarian assistance.

The gravity of the humanitarian crisis throughout the West Bank demands that the international community provide immediate assistance. The major humanitarian agencies have made urgent appeals. France has already sent more than 20 tons of emergency humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian territories through the International Committee of the Red Cross. Other emergency measures are being undertaken for the benefit of the Jenin refugee camp.

The scenes of devastation, in particular those in Jenin, as reported by the international press and the major humanitarian organizations, are extremely shocking. Every effort must be made to search for and rescue any survivors. The extreme seriousness of the eyewitness reports makes it absolutely necessary for us to find out the truth, in an objective manner. An international fact-finding committee must be sent to Jenin.

The time has also come to move the parties away from murderous confrontation. An international presence on the ground is indispensable; there is almost complete international consensus on that point. France fully supports the approach of the Secretary-General, who has made ambitious and courageous proposals for the deployment of a multinational interposition force. Such a force would work, together with the parties, to put an end to the spiral of violence and would monitor the ceasefire. It would establish a climate of security in the occupied Palestinian territories so as to ensure, in particular, that humanitarian assistance and economic aid could be delivered without impediment, in accordance with international humanitarian law. With the assistance of the international community, the force would contribute to the reconstruction of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, including its security apparatus, which have been destroyed. It would create conditions of calm conducive to the relaunching of a genuine political negotiating process aimed at a final settlement of the conflict, without which there will never be a lasting ceasefire.

A collective and in-depth process of reflection must now take place so that a well-considered and effective decision can be speedily arrived at. The international community should make clear its readiness to deploy an international presence and should immediately begin discussions on the practical ways and means of doing so. It would, of course, be appropriate to consult the parties; their cooperation will be required. The composition of any international force should be such that its impartiality would be assured for both parties. A significant American commitment appears to us to be indispensable.

The situation is tragic. We must not, however, lose hope. The efforts of the international community are continuing on an intensive basis. The United States sent its Secretary of State to the region, where he was able to meet at length with the leaders of the two parties. That new American commitment marks a positive turning point, however great the difficulties encountered may be. France hopes that the Secretary of State will continue his mission, which should benefit from the continuing support of the Security Council and of the international community as a whole. The Secretary of State has the full support of the other members of the "quartet" who, for their part, are also playing an active role. We must persevere along the path set out by Security Council resolutions. Only by redoubling our efforts and through political will and tenacity will the international community be able to get the parties to see reason and, finally, to establish peace.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): I would like to start by expressing our deepest condolences to our good friend Ambassador Yehuda Lancry, the Permanent Representative of Israel, for the untimely demise of his niece, who lost her life in a terrorist attack last week. Such untimely deaths bring home once again how important it is to stop the cycle of violence, which seems to have become the order of the day in the region. Neither side in this conflict will be able to advance its cause through violence and military assault; such acts can bring only destruction, loss and suffering to both sides.

At the end of the Security Council debate on the situation in the Middle East that took place on 9 April, the Permanent Representative of Israel expressed dismay at the statement made by Mauritius during the debate, claiming that it was one-sided. It is obvious that my good friend had not taken into account the specific context in which the statement was made. Our colleague is certainly aware of our unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, as well as of suicide bombings; we have expressed that position in many statements, both here and elsewhere.

The statement we made on 9 April came at a time when the entire international community was calling upon Israel to stop its military assaults in the occupied Palestinian territories; when Israel was turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the pressing calls made by the Security Council and the international community as a whole for withdrawal from the Palestinian cities; and when violations of international humanitarian law by Israel were taking place in defiance of the calls of the international community.

On 10 April, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. Hansen, said that "the situation in the Jenin refugee camp is fast turning into a catastrophe". UNRWA press reports indicated that Israeli tanks and bulldozers were intensifying their demolition of shelters in the Jenin camp and that bulldozers were "shaving off" shelters. Humanitarian workers were being denied access to the refugee camps and were prevented from providing basic necessities — food, water and medicine — to those in need. Ambulances were being shot at and doctors killed. In other words, Israel continued to flout Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002).

Let me also recall that the heads of the major international humanitarian agencies have expressed their deep dismay and outrage at the military actions in the occupied Palestinian territories and the consequences of such actions in exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. They also noted increasing and worrying incidences of flagrant disrespect for international law and the security of humanitarian personnel. Even the Secretary-General, in his address to the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, stated that in the Middle East international norms of human rights and humanitarian law were being violated on a massive scale. He also added that targeting civilians and the disproportionate use of force beyond legitimate military objectives are a violation of international humanitarian law and must be rejected.

In Madrid the Secretary-General stated that

> "respect for international humanitarian law and the humanitarian organizations is the most basic requirement for any nation that lays claim to democracy and membership of the international community."

Given the human tragedy that was unfolding in the Palestinian refugee camps, especially in Jenin, where women and children were falling victim to indiscriminate attacks by the Israeli Defence Forces, the position of Mauritius can certainly be well understood.

Mauritius is a law-abiding country which believes strongly in the sanctity of international institutions and has the greatest respect for international law and for the decisions of the Security Council. This is the principled position that guides us and will continue to guide our decisions and our statements for the rest of our tenure in the Security Council.

Today, with Israel only partially easing restrictions on access to the Jenin refugee camp, we are already hearing reports of the horrific scale of the devastation perpetrated by Israel in that area. The Special Coordinator of the United Nations for the Middle East, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, stated yesterday that the scene in Jenin was "horrifying beyond belief, as if there had been an earthquake there". This, sadly, reminds us of the devastation of 11 September, which occurred closer to us. It is still unclear how many innocent Palestinians were killed in Jenin. It would be worth finding out from the Israeli authorities how many innocent Palestinian civilians had to be sacrificed in the process of targeting the suspected terrorist elements in Jenin.

Mauritius believes that there should be a full-scale international investigation of the events that took place there. Furthermore, Israel should cooperate with the fact-finding mission that Ms. Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, intends to lead to the occupied Palestinian territories.

While we await the investigation, the humanitarian situation in Jenin should be addressed immediately. Israel should immediately lift the curfew on Jenin, and it should cooperate fully with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which are trying to rescue the civilians who remain trapped in the rubble and to alleviate the sufferings of those left in the area.

While we understand Israel's preoccupation with eliminating terrorist elements, it has clearly made no distinction between those who are engaged in terror and innocent Palestinian civilians. The deliberate and systematic humiliation of the Palestinian people and their leader will result only in the creation of many more militants and extremists, as was stated by the

representative of Ireland during our most recent debate. Besieging Chairman Arafat, as has been done for four months now, can only add to the growing anger of the Palestinians and to that of the Arab world. It is unwise and a clear miscalculation to sideline him, as he remains, as even foreign Minister Peres has admitted, the only avenue for any peace negotiation with Palestine.

We call upon Israel once again immediately to withdraw from all the Palestinian cities and immediately to implement Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002).

We condemn the siege on the Church of the Nativity just as much as we condemn the use of the Church as a sanctuary by militants.

Secretary of State Powell, to whom the Council gave its full support through its resolution 1403 (2002), is now back from his mission in the Middle East. While he may have made some progress towards a path to peace, it is clear that the main objective of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) concerning a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian cities has not been achieved, nor has the siege on Chairman Arafat ended, despite the statement he made last week denouncing all acts of terrorism. We welcome that statement, and we urge the Palestinians fully to abide by it.

It is time for us carefully to examine what needs to be done to ensure a complete Israeli withdrawal, as called for in Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). We need to reflect on what further action should be taken by the Security Council to pull the two parties out of the cycle of self-destruction and to bring them to the negotiating table, thereby leading to a political settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and the vision envisaged in resolution 1397 (2002).

In this context, the proposal outlined by the Secretary-General before the Council yesterday to put together a robust and credible multinational force to assist the parties in ending the violence appears to be not only timely but the only solution to this crisis. We share the view of the Secretary-General that left alone, the parties will not be able to extricate themselves from the current impasse.

We therefore call on all the members of the Council, as well as on the international community, to give careful consideration to this proposal, in order to avert any further aggravation of the situation, which could lead to full-scale disaster in the region.

The Middle East peace process is going through a very difficult time, and the credibility of the Security Council is being affected. It is very important that we all work together in the interest of international peace and security.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The international community had great expectations for the meeting of the "quartet" in Madrid and Secretary of State Powell's mission to the region. Perhaps those expectations were too great. The quartet and Secretary of State Powell have probably had a positive effect on the situation, and the concrete results will come into view only later on.

But the reality is that all these initiatives leave us with an additional sense of frustration, as the parties still have not complied with the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). That is why we find ourselves once again meeting in this Chamber.

I should like to touch on two separate but related topics: the humanitarian situation and the proposal for a multinational force.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, we have begun to receive initial reports from Jenin. The camp is described as appearing to have been struck by an earthquake — such is the degree of devastation and destruction. What emerges clearly from such early reports is that what happened in Jenin goes beyond any military logic. Reports of buildings being demolished with women and children still inside them are appalling, to say the least. Other testimony about summary executions and the use of civilians as human shields are very serious allegations of international humanitarian law.

What is most important now is for us to help the people who are still in the camp, to attend properly to the wounded, to rescue those still trapped in the rubble and to retrieve the bodies of the dead. We would like to join all of those who have called on the Israeli authorities immediately to allow rescue teams free access to Jenin.

But above and beyond emergency humanitarian action, there must be a clarification of what actually

happened in Jenin, and we deem it indispensable that a mechanism of inquiry be set up.

Jenin is perhaps the most tragic case with respect to the humanitarian situation, but it is certainly not the only one. We have been told, for instance, that the strict military controls for access to the Gaza Strip are causing a food shortage.

The mission of the Commission on Human Rights, led by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, has been postponed because the Israeli authorities have not given their permission.

I wish to point out that nothing that I have said means in any way that the suicide attacks carried out by extremist Palestinians against the Israeli civilian population can be excused. On other occasions, in this Chamber and in informal consultations of the Council, we have denounced this practice, emphasizing also its total ineffectiveness in the search for the political results to which the Palestinian population aspires. In this context, the use of holy sites as areas of confrontation is unacceptable. That is what is happening at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Yesterday the Secretary-General made a proposal to the members of the Security Council on the establishment of a multinational force. We welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative in consultations and do so now at this open meeting. It is undoubtedly an important proposal that must be very seriously considered. It is clear that the parties are submerged in war logic, as was pointed out in the Secretary-General's briefing. Therefore, intervention by a third party is needed. We had already expressed our belief that neither the actions of the Israeli Defense Forces nor the suicide attacks of extremist Palestinians will achieve the security hoped for by some nor the political aspirations of the other side.

The only possible path has been and continues to be political negotiations. The establishment of a multinational force would contribute to the creation of a climate favourable to political negotiations. The parties must recognize that this would benefit both sides. Therefore, they should welcome the Secretary-General's proposal. We hope to be able to discuss his initiative as soon as possible, once it has been evaluated in the various capitals.

Colombia believes that we must continue building an appropriate role for the Council to play in this age-old Middle Eastern conflict, a role that will be fulfilled by preserving unity among its members, as well as the type of cohesion demonstrated in this latest phase, at least since 12 March, when resolution 1397 (2002) was adopted. It would be inconsistent and inappropriate if the Council were to contradict the spirit and the content of resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002).

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): Ireland is fully associated with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Since the Council adopted resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), the situation in the Middle East has grown ever more critical and perilous. Resolution 1397 (2002) affirmed a vision of what could be achieved by the parties trusting themselves to take essential steps of faith and courage towards the goal of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders.

Instead of seeing progress towards this goal, the international community in recent weeks has watched events spiral out of control. Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) have not been implemented, including by the failure of Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian-controlled territories as demanded by the Council.

Our debate today, therefore, takes place at a time of sadness and anger, felt across the world, at what has been happening in the region. Violence and blood-spilling on a daily basis have affronted the conscience of the world. No other words will do. The demands of the Security Council have not been heeded. Rules of honour, legal and moral, on how people should treat each other have been broken with what seems like careless indifference and disregard. The situation has been and remains an unacceptable affront to the values that we in the United Nations, and the wider international community, cherish.

Ireland greatly appreciates the role of the "quartet" in recent weeks in seeking to turn the tide of violence. I want to pay special tribute to Secretary Powell for his unflagging work in the region over the past period. It must be clear to all of us that it is now more important than ever that a strong, vigorous level of engagement by the international community be sustained and intensified over the coming period in

order to advance a political dynamic and achieve an end to violence. Left to themselves, the parties will remain paralysed and frozen.

Ireland fully accepts that the Government of Israel has a right and a duty to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks. We totally condemn the practice of suicide bombings, which have killed many innocent Israeli civilians. These attacks on innocent civilians must stop for good.

We know from our own experience in Ireland the fear that is generated by acts of terror and the disruption that these acts cause to normal life. We also know from our own experience that it is not enough to fight terrorism by military means alone. Such a struggle would be interminable. The root causes of conflict must also be addressed, and this battle can only be fought by political means.

It has also been the case — and it remains the case — that any actions by Israel must be proportionate, and must also be in accordance with international humanitarian law. The actions that have been taken over the past two weeks in the West Bank have been far from proportionate. The reports we have received, and the accounts we have had from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Welfare Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and from universally respected non-governmental organizations, as well as the briefing we received yesterday from Secretary-General Annan, make it clear that Israel has the most serious questions to answer about the conduct of its operations.

A security force is not entitled to bombard houses inhabited by civilians, or systematically to bulldoze their houses and leave them without shelter. One can never justify refusing for several days to allow access for humanitarian assistance to the civilian population, or to leave a population without food, water and shelter. Nor can there be any justification for refusing to conduct, or permit to be arranged, an emergency operation to rescue people trapped in rubble until it was too late. We cannot regard all this as other then a serious breach of international humanitarian law.

Israel must now cooperate fully with UNRWA and other agencies in allowing humanitarian relief to reach people who are without food, water, shelter and medical services. Water and electricity supplies must be restored. The curfew in Jenin must be lifted.

Israel must also cooperate fully with the United Nations Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to help them establish what has happened in Jenin and elsewhere and to give the world a full and accurate picture of events. Ireland fully supports the call for an independent investigation. Furthermore, we specifically request the Israeli Government to allow the High Commissioner, Mrs. Mary Robinson, to enter Israel and the Palestinian areas to fulfil the mandate given to her by the United Nations body charged with the protection of human rights, and to do so now.

As the Secretary-General has several times told the Council, there is no military solution to this conflict. Far from advancing peace and security, the use of force embitters people and corrodes trust, and puts off the day of peace. Ireland calls on the Palestinian Authority to do all in its power to prevent acts of violence against civilians. We call on both sides to implement fully resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). In particular, we call on Israel to do fully and totally, now, what it should have done, at once, following resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002): withdraw from all the Palestinian-controlled areas, including Ramallah, Bethlehem and Gaza. The restrictions on the movement of Chairman Arafat must be ended.

My authorities are seriously concerned at the declared intention of the Israeli authorities to establish a tight cordon around the Palestinian-controlled areas after they have evacuated, permitting movement neither in nor out. What are its intentions for the population of these areas? Are they to be kept in permanent captivity? What economic activity will sustain them? Who will provide their security, now that the Palestinian security structures have been systematically destroyed? What civil structures can be envisaged in such conditions?

Ireland shares the Secretary-General's deep concern at the danger to regional security presented by the attacks launched across the Blue Line. The Council has determined that resolution 425 (1978) has been implemented in respect of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. The relevant Council resolutions require that all concerned do all in their power to ensure respect for the Blue Line in its entirety.

Mutual trust has completely broken down between the parties. We in the Council, and the international community in general, must redouble our efforts to help both sides move out of this dire impasse. We therefore welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General for an international force to provide the security environment, and the space, for a return to political negotiations. My authorities regard this as a serious and important contribution to the efforts to resolve this issue. We urge the parties to give it the most careful consideration, and also urge others in the international community to persuade them of the help that it could offer towards helping them to emerge from the present deadlock.

We have also listened very carefully to what has been said regarding an international conference. We agree that a well-prepared and inclusive conference, called for the purpose of setting in motion negotiations aimed at achieving the vision, enshrined in Secretary Powell's Louisville speech and in the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, and endorsed at the recent summit of the League of Arab States and in our own resolution 1397 (2002), is worth the most careful consideration by the parties and by the international community. It must be for each participant to nominate its own representative to the conference.

The Israeli and Palestinian people must live together side by side. Every Israeli, and every Palestinian, has to recognize this. The Palestinian people are entitled to their national aspirations, and it is the denial of these aspirations for so long that is the primary cause of the present crisis. Israel is entitled to secure and recognized borders. The political, security and economic and humanitarian tracks must now be engaged with all speed and determination, so that a political settlement can be reached based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom fully subscribes to the European Union position presented by Spain yesterday.

In the last Security Council debate on Palestine, I called the continuation of Israeli actions in the West Bank intolerable. The development of the situation since then has indeed become I think for almost all of us more than we can bear. The image of the region's only truly democratic State lowering its standards to the point — if first reports are in due course confirmed — of callous disregard for civilian life and humanitarian circumstances is a truly disturbing one. All the evidence points to excessive and disproportionate use of force by the Israeli Defense Forces in Jenin and elsewhere. This is not only unacceptable in terms of what Israel is professing to achieve in the longer term; it is also futile and unproductive.

The British Government believes that the circumstances of the fighting in and around Jenin, and perhaps elsewhere in the West Bank, need to be carefully examined against the obligations on all States to observe international law and international humanitarian law in the conduct of military operations. The United Kingdom would wish to see an independent inquiry set up soon to establish the facts of what has happened.

Also, in the short term, we regard the humanitarian requirements as paramount. Unrestricted and unconditional access for relief agencies and medical workers must be allowed at once. Here, too, the proper action has been too slow. We have made this clear to the Israeli Government, and in turn they must make it clear to their forces on the ground.

Meanwhile, we are all too well aware that the resolutions of the Council have not been implemented. The United Kingdom continues to insist on the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian territory. Arrangements must quickly be put in hand for a ceasefire and for steps to be taken for an early return to political negotiations.

We applaud the efforts of Secretary of State Powell, together with other members of the "quartet" on the ground, to set in place the necessary steps. We look forward to his and their continuing engagement. As the British Prime Minister has made very clear in his public statements, there is no alternative to intensive third-party action to ensure that the parties return to a sensible course of a cessation of violence and a return to political negotiations. We accept that this will have to be done in a series of measured steps. There will be no overnight success.

The Secretary-General, who clearly shares that view, has made a further, carefully considered proposal for the introduction of an international force to help damp down the violence and restore the prospects for political discussion. The United Kingdom will study his proposals in detail.

We all recognize that such a proposal, as the Secretary-General himself has made clear, would need the support of both parties if it was to be realizable. At the very least, there will need to be significant international assistance to the Palestinian Authority to restore its capacity to administrate the occupied territories and to regenerate some kind of a normal life to the Palestinian people. Assistance in the security aspects of that will have to be carefully considered. The United Kingdom is prepared to stretch to the limit the boundaries of practicality, but if proposals are to be successfully implemented, realities will have to be respected.

Automatic recourse to continued violence is entrenching itself deeply in the psychology of both sides. A proper ceasefire is an essential prerequisite to restoring the situation to a point where hope can be regenerated. This has to include the complete cessation of acts of terrorism by Palestinians against innocent Israeli civilians. And on this, the Palestinian leadership has not been convincing. Leaders on both sides carry the responsibility ahead of anyone else of making sure that the route to peace is now rebuilt.

We must not loose sight of the basics behind all this. The Palestinians are entitled to a homeland, their own State. Israel is entitled to absolute security. The two go together.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The picture in the Middle East is grave and the prognosis of how it might evolve is critical and pessimistic. Nothing of what has been attempted so far to alleviate the situation. The resolutions of the Security Council, diplomatic initiatives by the "quartet" and Secretary Powell's trip have either been ignored or have not produced the outcomes that everyone hoped for. International diplomacy in the Middle East seems to be at an impasse. None of the initiatives to alleviate the situation has worked. The Palestinians and Israelis are trapped in an inescapable spiral of resentment, reprisal and hatred. The events in the Palestinian territories, particularly in Jenin, deepen the wounds of history and prevent them from healing; they cast a pall over the future. The persistence of suicidal terrorist acts exacerbates the suffering and anguish of the Israeli people and drives the parties even further from a solution based on reconciliation and hope.

Given this situation, my delegation wishes first to express its most profound concern at the grave humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in the Jenin refugee camp, where, according to preliminary reports, there has been large-scale destruction with devastating effects on the civilian population.

The Secretary-General's statement before the Security Council yesterday seems to confirm the international community's fear that deplorable acts have been committed in Jenin. Thus, a necessary first step is for the international community to move urgently to protect the civilian population and to provide humanitarian assistance so that the minimum conditions for sustenance can be ensured. In this context, my country once again calls on Israel to comply fully with international humanitarian law and to provide unhindered access to relief and assistance organizations.

We know that this is not enough. That is why Mexico strongly supports the request of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, to be allowed to carry out her functions on the ground so that a report can be prepared on the human rights situation in the occupied territories. We also believe that resolute action must be taken by the Secretary-General, such as his attempts to provide humanitarian assistance to the region. We also consider the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the non-governmental humanitarian community to be fundamental in dealing with the problem.

Given the gravity of events in Jenin, as preliminary reports suggest, the international community requests the creation of a commission of inquiry to shed light on the facts and to assess their true scope. Mexico supports that request and believes that it is the Secretary-General's duty to define the shape such an inquiry would take.

Mexico deplores once again that the international community's appeals to break the cycle of violence have gone ignored. That cannot be tolerated. Security Council resolutions must be complied with fully and unconditionally. In this respect, we have already pointed out that the United Nations Charter clearly sets out the measures to ensure compliance with the Organization's decisions and the actions necessary to maintain international peace and security in critical situations, such as that of the Middle East today.

My country reaffirms that the Council must not lose sight of its own powers and mandate. The premises according to which we must act are obvious and of indisputable validity. We cannot base our actions in the Middle East on assumptions that reality and the behaviour of the parties to the conflict have so often proven wrong. We must therefore first recognize in the clearest manner that the recent actions of the Israeli armed forces in Palestine demonstrate that the use of force is not the solution. The proof is irrefutable. There is no military solution to the conflict. The violence of both sides lacks any political, legal, military or moral justification. The parties do not acknowledge this; they remain committed to violence.

Confronted with this situation, the international community must be unequivocal. The friends of the Palestinian people, especially in the Arab world, and the friends of Israel must not even insinuate that there is any valid justification, reason or understandable basis for the acts of violence committed by either side. That must be the unquestionable starting point for the international community's response to the conflict.

Furthermore, a solution will not come from the initiatives or the resolve of the parties, nor can they impose their will by force. However, the international community, the Council, the United Nations as a whole and the "quartet" must craft formulas for a viable solution based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations, drawing on the diplomatic and political skills of all, especially of those with the greatest influence over the parties. A qualitative leap must be made; we must move beyond diplomatic efforts and the promotion of understanding in the region to positive action so that Israel and Palestine can escape the trap of violence into which they have fallen. That will enable us to tackle the roots, structure and multiple dimensions of the conflict.

My country believes that, in addition to the preceding elements, we should call for a third party with a direct presence in the area of conflict and with full legitimacy and determination to enforce international law and the civilized will of the international community.

The lack of a solution coming from the parties themselves has led to a situation of paralysis which, for the sake of international peace and security, must not be tolerated. We must be clear: the paralysis of the parties must not spread to the international community. On the contrary, the international community must adopt a proactive stance capable of offering alternatives leading to a peaceful solution to the conflict. Thus, Mexico, conscious of the difficulties and the risks involved, has nevertheless decided to welcome with complete enthusiasm the Secretary-General's proposal to the Security Council on the creation of a multinational force under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

We are pleased that this proposal has been submitted for the consideration of the international community so that it may be examined and defined prior to its due and prudent implementation. The proposal offers a new range of action towards which we must mobilize our forces. In the face of the deadlocked situation and the endless suffering of the civilian population, we can no longer postpone international action. History shows that the parties are extremely unlikely to break the cycle of violence, much less re-establish the minimum level of trust necessary to relaunching the negotiations.

Only through the intervention of such a multilateral force on the ground can we ensure compliance with the decisions taken by the community of States, in particular Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), and thus move towards a definitive solution to the conflict: the establishment of a Palestinian State within secure borders with Israel.

We agree with the Secretary-General that this mechanism for mediation should establish a secure environment for the parties and the conditions necessary to the resumption of political negotiations towards a definitive settlement that will make reality the vision described in resolution 1397 (2002) of two States, Israel and Palestine, living in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): We listened carefully to the debate yesterday and this morning, which was convened soon after United States Secretary of State Colin Powell returned from his important mission to the Middle East. Here, we are pleased to note that the Council decided to wait for his return before resuming its discussion on the Middle East.

One of the key tasks of Secretary Powell's visit was to work towards the implementation of Security Council 1402 (2002). The international community, including this Council, had given its full backing to

Secretary Powell's mission. This meeting is therefore an opportune moment to consider how far we have progressed towards ensuring observance of the decisions we have adopted, including resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), as well as our presidential statement of 10 April 2002. We should also, of course, consider how best the Council can work further to ensure full compliance with its resolutions.

Singapore finds it highly regrettable that the clear demands made by the Security Council for an immediate cessation of violence and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities have not been fulfilled. Instead, we find a grim humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories, which must be reversed straight away. In particular, we have heard alarming reports about the horrific devastation, both human and material, in the Jenin refugee camp. Immediate efforts to address the humanitarian situation must be undertaken. We note that several speakers have highlighted the importance of addressing the situation in Jenin. This is one clear theme that has emerged from the debate and we hope that concrete results will also emerge from this debate on the situation in Jenin.

In this regard, we also fully support the three immediate requirements set out by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, namely, the lifting of the curfew and allowing freedom of movement for civilian and humanitarian workers alike; expanded assistance from the Israel Defence Forces to humanitarian workers, in terms of both the provision of equipment and security liaison; and the facilitation of the delivery of large-scale water and food supplies to the population in need.

There have been claims and counter-claims on the nature and extent of the humanitarian crisis. We believe that the only way objectively to assess the situation and to dispel any unfounded rumours is for an independent and impartial body to establish the facts. Again, we note that several speakers have called for such an independent inquiry.

Like many who have spoken before us, we are gratified that Secretary Powell's visit has produced some results. One of the key achievements is a strong convergence of views, including in the joint statement by the "quartet" and supported by the Security Council, that a coherent and comprehensive long-term strategy is needed to help the parties break the cycle of violence. This includes ending the violence and starting the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories under Palestinian control, accompanied at the same time by genuine efforts by the Palestinian Authority to take steps against suicide bombers and other acts of terror.

An equally important component of this comprehensive approach is to provide the political horizon and the hopes for peace. Long-term progress depends on the political will of both sides to move beyond short-term security measures to the broad vision set out in resolution 1397 (2002), in which two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. The Arab peace initiative adopted at the Beirut summit is a historic opportunity that should not be squandered. We look forward to further initiatives to bring the process forward.

The international community must also address the long-term economic situation. We hope that the donor community will respond generously to help rebuild the destroyed Palestinian infrastructure and economy.

As we have learned in so many other conflict situations, progress on the security, political, humanitarian and reconstruction tracks, within the framework of a comprehensive strategy, are mutually reinforcing. Yesterday, the Secretary-General also provided convincing reasons why the deployment of an impartial, robust and credible multinational force could create a secure environment and political space that will allow the comprehensive strategic framework to take root. The Secretary-General's proposal for an international presence merits serious consideration.

Clearly, the Secretary-General has fulfilled his Charter obligation under Article 99 to bring to the Council's attention

> "any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security".

It is now up to the Security Council to decide whether it can live up to its own Charter responsibility under Article 24 as the principal organ of the United Nations conferred with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Indeed, as we all know, this is a question that has been widely asked around this debate: Can the Security

Council seriously meet the responsibilities that it has on the Middle East issue?

In conclusion, we would like to stress that clear pronouncements made by the Security Council are being ignored and that basic principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, are being flouted. This will, in the long run, only damage the credibility of the Security Council and the security of all States. If the Security Council does not take immediate steps to ensure full compliance with resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), we risk eroding the Council's authority to ensure the full implementation of its other resolutions. I believe that the Permanent Representative of Mexico, speaking earlier, also made the point about the credibility of the Council.

We should therefore find effective ways of collaborating closely with all relevant partners to ensure compliance with Security Council decisions. We also believe that only by harmonizing our efforts and acting in unity can we best achieve our objectives.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The entire world has witnessed the killing and destruction in the Jenin refugee camp, Nablus, Ramallah and other Palestinian cities and villages where the media have yet to arrive. A tragedy has been visited upon the Palestinian people.

In this regard, I should like to express our appreciation once again to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting in response to the request by the Group of Arab States.

My delegation associates itself with the statement by the Permanent Representative of sisterly Tunisia on behalf of the Group of Arab States. We had hoped to share the optimism of many State representatives who addressed the Council last week with regard to persuading Israel to cease the barbaric and destructive policies that it is pursuing and to withdraw immediately from Palestinian cities and villages recently reoccupied. We believe that it is now clear to everyone — even the most optimistic among us — that the Israeli war Government is not only far removed from peace and the logic of peace, but is also waging a war against the principles and values of peace. Israel's only intentions and methods seem to be to kill peace, to perpetuate Israel's occupation of Arab lands and to frustrate the aspirations of the Palestinian people to end Israel's occupation, oppression, spite and racial hatred and its war against the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian land. Such Israeli acts can have no other meaning.

In its insistence on implementing those policies, the Israeli Government did not even heed the advice of its closest allies — those who have always promised it their full support. Thus, Israel rejected all calls to withdraw immediately from Palestinian cities and to end its attacks on Palestinian civilians. Instead, in defiance of those allies and the Security Council, Israel persisted in its attacks on the defenceless Palestinian people. It carried out new massacres, then proceeded to destroy what it had been unable to destroy at the beginning of its campaign of aggression.

As for Israel's total disregard of the Council's resolutions, it requires no proof or evidence. Since the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002), which was reaffirmed by the adoption of resolution 1403 (2002), Israel has not explicitly rejected either of those resolutions. Instead, it has acted consistently against their substance, in addition to issuing a torrent of statements directly attacking the Council's credibility. What is worse, it has attempted to mislead the international community by pointing the finger of blame at the Palestinians and the Arab States in order to divert attention from the realities on the ground. On a number of occasions, our delegation and other Arab delegations have warned that we must be very careful with regard to the Israeli Government's position, as it has attempted to ride the wave of anti-terrorist sentiment and has used the tactic of buying time to carry out more war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing under flimsy and mendacious pretexts.

It is very sad that the Council — indeed, the entire United Nations system — has been unable thus far to end the massacre being carried out by Israel under the international community's nose. Such impotence was explicitly shown by the failure of the United Nations to respond even to the cries of its own officials in the Palestinian territories. Those officials found the Organization's deafening silence very strange in the light of the damage caused to institutions it had built through the efforts of the international community since 1948. Israel was allowed to demolish what the United Nations had built over a period of more than 50 years with the help of the donor community: institutions, schools, clinics — the infrastructure built to reduce the suffering of those whom Israel had forcibly expelled in 1948.

It is not surprising that those refugees should bear the brunt of Israel's war machine today. Israel does not want them to remain alive — rather, it wants to bury them, and with them the cause of a people forced to seek refuge in a diaspora, exiled from their land and their homes. We all heard the statement by Mr. Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), describing Israel's gross violations of the Geneva conventions. He stated that Israeli forces had intentionally destroyed medical equipment owned by the United Nations. He explained how ambulances owned by UNRWA had been targeted, adding that Israel had destroyed medical supplies and equipment in some medical centres and had used UNRWA's schools as interrogation centres. Mr. Hansen continued that Israeli soldiers, before waging war on the camps, placed ammunition in UNRWA vehicles on two occasions and were caught by UNRWA personnel. At this very moment, while we are meeting, Israel is escalating its barbaric practices against the Palestinian people. They are carrying out massacres that are a breech of all international laws, instruments and norms. They are laying unjust siege to Palestinian cities and villages, and even when pretending to withdraw from some cities they remain at the gates and encircle the cities. All these are war crimes and crimes against humanity, including crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Israeli occupation forces have been preventing international humanitarian organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNRWA, from performing the humanitarian role of providing supplies and medical assistance to the wounded and from trying to rescue and save civilians from under the rubble of their homes. These acts must all be firmly and strongly dealt with by the international community. They must be directly condemned by all States. We must intervene immediately to put an end to the Israeli policy of killing and destroying.

Israel's disregard for Security Council resolutions must in no way lead to a paralysis of the Council's actions in response to Israel's aggression and anti-peace policies. Once again, what is required is for the Council to respond to international will, to shoulder its fundamental responsibility to maintain international peace and security. We reaffirm that the massacre perpetrated by the Israeli Government in the Jenin refugee camp and in other Palestinian cities must not be condoned in any way whatsoever.

The draft resolution presented by the Arab Group contains a paragraph requesting the Secretary-General to dispatch a committee to the Jenin refugee camp to investigate the Israel's massacre of innocent Palestinian civilians and to witness first hand the destruction visited upon that camp.

The draft resolution presented by the Arab Group is yet another attempt that ought to be supported by all members of the Security Council. We hope it will be, because it responds to the wishes of the international community and reflects our desire to safeguard the prestige, unity and role of the Security Council and consistency in its actions.

The last Arab Summit meeting in Beirut drew a map for a comprehensive, just peace and for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the region. The Arab Summit proposal proceeds from the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace. The implementation of these resolutions would insure full Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab lands and would end the occupation that is the fundamental, genuine source of all the problems and instability that prevail in the region.

The establishment of the independent Palestinian State on Palestinian soil with East Jerusalem as its capital, the rightful return of Palestinian refugees, a right affirmed by the resolutions of the international community — those are the elements of a peaceful settlement that will lead to peace and security in the region. Continued occupation and the continual killing of Palestinians will not lead to peace.

Yesterday we heard the statement of the Secretary-General in which he spoke of the tragic situation of the Palestinian people. We have also been following the statements of his personal representatives, Terje Roed Larsen, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and Peter Hansen, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA. We heard from them an accurate description of Israel's crimes in Jenin and in other Palestinian cities and villages. While we highly appreciate the calls for an end to this tragedy from the Secretary-General and his representatives, we call on the international community to help in preventing a catastrophe on Palestinian land and against its people.

Let me point specifically to the proposal made by the Secretary-General pertaining to the dispatch of a multinational force to the occupied Palestinian

territories. It is my pleasure to express the strong welcome and support of the Syrian Arab Republic for the Secretary-General's proposal to dispatch such a force.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): The situation in the Middle East is at a crossroad. The responsibility for ending violence and pursuing peace rests primarily with the parties. But the international community cannot remain aloof.

Norway regrets that Secretary Powell's mission to the Middle East did not achieve all its goals. However, we welcome the continued commitment of the United States to finding a way to peace.

Israel has the right to protect its citizens. The terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens must be condemned, and they must stop. Yet Israel also carries a big responsibility for the well-being of innocent civilians living in the occupied territories.

Norway is deeply shocked by the damage inflicted by the Israeli military attacks, in particular in Jenin. Israel has clear obligations under international law to protect civilians. The destruction of civilian and personal property is not acceptable. Norway is extremely concerned with the humanitarian consequences of the destruction inflicted upon Palestinian towns, villages and in particular the refugee camp in Jenin. Norway believes it is in the interest of both Israelis and Palestinians to find out exactly what happened during the most recent waves of fighting, not least in Jenin.

It is important to provide urgent assistance to the wounded, the homeless and the hungry, some of whom have been made refugees anew. Israel must immediately allow unhindered access for all humanitarian organizations and emergency supplies, through Israel, to the relevant parts of the Palestinian area.

In order to design an appropriate response to this humanitarian crisis, Norway, which chairs the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians (AHLC), is hosting, in close cooperation with AHLC partners, an AHLC meeting in Oslo on 24 and 25 April. It is our hope that this meeting will clarify the most urgent needs and provide an international commitment to the rebuilding of Palestinian society.

Humanitarian assistance can minimize the suffering, but the fundamental problem — that of ending the occupation — is political. There are sufficient guidelines from international society to the parties —from the Security Council, from the "quartet" and from the United States Administration — on how to reach a ceasefire and to resume a meaningful political process. Norway supports the idea of establishing an observer mechanism if this can help the parties to reach those goals. The ideas of the Secretary-General regarding an international force are an important contribution to the discussion on how the international community can assist in finding a solution to the present crisis. A number of elements will be further clarified. However, such a force will be dependent on the consent of both parties.

Norway calls on Israel and the Palestinians to act with responsibility and to move towards a political resolution of the conflict. It is time for the parties to adopt a constructive strategy. Norway calls on Israel to immediately halt all its military operations and withdraw its forces from reoccupied Palestinian towns and villages. President Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must do their utmost to stop Palestinian terrorism. Israel must stop destroying the Palestinian police infrastructure, which undermines the long-term capacity of the Palestinian Authority to fight terrorism. President Arafat must be allowed to resume his duties as head of the Palestinian Authority.

Our objective must be the resumption of peace negotiations with the aim of realizing the international consensus on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within internationally recognized borders.

The Council must do what it can to support the realization of this vision. At this critical hour, the Council must act with one voice in pursuit of a new future for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Mr. Negroponte (United States): The United States is fully committed to peace in the Middle East and we are working with all the countries that have a stake in this conflict. Secretary Powell returned from the Middle East early Thursday morning after 10 days in the region. While there, he met with the leaders of Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Lebanon, and with some of them

on more than one occasion. Yesterday, he met with President Bush to report on the progress achieved and on the difficult situation on the ground.

Secretary Powell made progress during his mission and I would like to take this opportunity to share some of his findings. First, Secretary Powell obtained an Israeli commitment to wind down its military operations. The Israeli Defence Forces have withdrawn from Jenin and will be pulling out of Nablus soon. President Bush publicly affirmed that the Israelis "must continue their withdrawals". Secondly, Secretary Powell obtained a clear statement from the Palestinian leadership condemning recent terrorist attacks, notably the horrific suicide bombings in Netanya and Jerusalem. Again, President Bush called on the Palestinian Authority to "act on its condemnation of terror".

As he said yesterday, Secretary Powell found broad support among Israelis, Palestinians, Arab States and members of the "quartet" for a comprehensive strategy as a way forward that comprises three key elements: first, security and freedom from terror and violence for Israelis and Palestinians alike; secondly, serious and accelerated negotiations to revive hope and lead to a political settlement; and thirdly, economic and humanitarian assistance to address the increasingly desperate conditions faced by the Palestinian people.

I must emphasize that the progress achieved should be measured against our commitment to sustained engagement with the parties and our determination to make significant progress towards peace. Our goal remains the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1402 (2002) and a just and lasting solution based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). United States Assistant Secretary of State Burns remains in the region; the Secretary of State has stated his intention to return to the region to continue his diplomatic efforts; and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is in Washington as we speak.

Given the complexity of the tasks ahead, we must remain focused on the region. As the Secretary-General said to the Security Council yesterday,

> "Through three recent resolutions — 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) — and the presidential statement of 10 April, you have clearly outlined a vision of a final settlement and the steps that should be taken to enable political negotiations to resume."

These resolutions demand an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, terror, provocation, incitement and destruction. They also contain comprehensive calls to action on the political, humanitarian and military aspects of the current crisis and provide a practical road map for moving forward. The "quartet", supported by this Council, called for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities and addressed the need to halt terror and violence, the growing risk to regional security and the urgent need for economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. They will meet again soon to discuss next steps.

The United States has pressed Israel to allow full and unimpeded access to the Jenin camp for humanitarian organizations and services. American diplomats have been working with relief organizations on the ground and access has been improved. The Israelis should allow immediate, unrestricted access to international humanitarian and aid workers, as well as to search and rescue teams. We are encouraged by the entry into the camp today of Swiss and Norwegian search-and-rescue teams.

Alleviating the situation in Jenin should be our priority humanitarian objective at this time. Further Security Council action is not the best way to meet this objective. Rather, we can make more of an impact by working directly with the parties on the ground.

We have also taken several concrete steps to address the humanitarian situation facing the Palestinian people. Last Friday President Bush authorized an additional $30 million in support of the emergency programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, our aid organization has pledged $62 million in accelerated assistance for health care, water-system repairs and emergency food aid. The United States welcomes the invitation of Norway to convene a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee next Wednesday to consider both urgent and longer-term assistance and the development and reconstruction needs of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people.

My country firmly believes that the Security Council is most effective and its resolutions most meaningful when its actions are focused on areas of

convergence and agreement. When we speak with one voice and demonstrate cohesion, our words have real strength. Witness, for example, resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). When, instead, we are focused too narrowly on areas of difference and the condemnation of one side or another, we risk producing words that can only serve to inflame the conflict at hand. Accentuating our differences can only be counterproductive to our common purpose of bringing lasting peace to this beleaguered part of the world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

Despite the diplomatic efforts made by many countries, the situation in the Middle East has reached a boiling point.

The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories has been described by everyone as catastrophic. Representatives of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, non-governmental organizations and the mass media all have been shaken by the tragedy that took place in the Jenin refugee camp. The Security Council must take urgent measures to remedy the terrible plight of the Palestinian population and to protect the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem as well as all other holy sites.

Members of the international community are also united in their belief that a comprehensive settlement in the region can be achieved only within the framework of political dialogue, and that the first step in this direction should be the immediate implementation of all of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1402 (2002), including a ceasefire, an end to the terror and violence, and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Palestinian territories. All impediments to the activities of humanitarian organizations must be removed, and the siege on Yasser Arafat's residence must be lifted, as he is the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people and must lead the efforts of the Palestinians to normalize the situation.

We deeply appreciate the efforts made by the Secretary-General in seeking a way out of the extremely dangerous situation now prevailing. We support his proposal to send an international force to the Palestinian territories. Of course, this proposal will require discussion in the Security Council, on the basis of comprehensive and complete information on the parameters of such an operation. It is of fundamental importance in the implementation of that proposal to develop common approaches on the part of all interested States and parties.

Russia, for its part, will continue to work actively with the parties to defuse the crisis as soon as possible, acting in coordination with the American co-sponsor and other participants in the "quartet" of international mediators, in close contact with the leading countries of the region. We agree with the Secretary-General that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), the Madrid quartet statement, which was supported by the Council, and the Arab peace initiative contain all the necessary elements for the collective elaboration of a comprehensive settlement that would make it possible to address the security concerns of all of the countries of the region, to ensure peaceful coexistence between Israel and a Palestinian state and to deal with the causes of the current acts of terrorism.

However, the most important step at this point is the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002). This is the position of all members of the Security Council. The joint statement of the members of the quartet was devoted to this issue, and this was also the aim of the mission to the region of the United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Only if this resolution is implemented will it be possible to stop the situation from spiralling even further out of control, destroying Israeli-Palestinian relations, creating a further setback for the peace process in the Middle East and causing the conflagration to spread to the entire region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine): Yesterday we heard a statement by the representative of Israel, and we feel compelled to respond to one or two of the points raised in that statement, out of the many outrageous positions contained therein.

In that statement, the Israeli representative said:

> "The use of the term 'massacre' in the context of the battle that took place in Jenin is of course politically convenient for the Palestinian side. It is a distortion that attempts to create a moral equivalence between the suicide bomber,

> who deliberately targets civilians, and the soldier, whose mission is to protect against them."

Frankly, I am not aware of any people who would welcome being massacred for the sake of political convenience. I am also unable to understand how firing missiles and bulldozing homes with people still inside them could be justified by military considerations.

In any case, allow me to take a minute of the Council's time and to read a statement to which many representatives referred yesterday, which was made by the United Nations Special Coordinator, Mr. Roed-Larsen:

> "The situation is shocking and horrifying beyond belief. It looks as if an earthquake has hit the heart of the refugee camp here. I have just witnessed two brothers digging their father and five other family members out of the rubble. I witnessed a family digging out their son, who was about 12 years old, from beneath the rubble. There is a stench of decay and corpses everywhere here. The scene is absolutely unbelievable. What we are seeing here is the large-scale suffering of the whole civilian population here. No military operation could justify the suffering we are seeing here. It is not only the corpses. It is also children lacking food."

I also wish to say a word about the issue of moral equivalence. Some years ago the former Secretary of State, Mrs. Madeleine Albright, whom I highly respect, used to say that there is no moral equivalence between bombs and bulldozers, referring to Israeli settlement activities in the occupied territories. Back then we begged to differ, because settlement activities negated the present and the future of the Palestinian people as a whole. Nevertheless, we understood the logic. Today some people want us to believe that there is no moral equivalence between blood and other blood, between human loss and other human loss.

We condemn all types of loss of human life. To tell the truth, if we are to make comparisons, we also believe that what is happening on the Israeli side is much worse than what is happening on the Palestinian side. That is simply because what is happening on the Israeli side is being committed by an army — an army of a State that implements the official policies of a Government, an army whose soldiers have been committing clear, grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and clear war crimes. On the Palestinian side, there are groups committing outrageous and condemnable, illegal acts in direct contradiction to the official policy. One might add to that the fact that what is happening to the Palestinian people is happening on a much larger scale. We have many more casualties. We have many more dead. We have much more destruction. The lives of the Palestinian people as a whole are being destroyed. So please do not try to speak about moral equivalence, Mr. Representative of Israel.

We must affirm our full respect for the positions expressed by members of the Council. Nevertheless, I have to admit that we were perplexed at the comments of the representative of Bulgaria. The representative does not see the need for a new resolution. Maybe he has not heard that the relevant Security Council resolutions have not been implemented. Maybe he has not heard about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, including in Jenin, and the need for a positive response. The Ambassador also made hesitant comments, sounding almost negative about the Secretary-General's proposal or at least about important parts of it, which would render the proposal itself dysfunctional. Frankly, we are surprised that since Bulgaria became a member of the Security Council, its delegation has not shown the expected sensitivity towards the Palestinian situation and the Palestinians' just requests of the Council. We are surprised because we are familiar with the traditionally friendly Bulgarian position. For our part, of course, we will do our best in a very amicable and politically correct way to overcome this strange situation.

We are convinced of the imperative of adopting the new resolution. We understand the hesitancy on the part of some members of the Council, and we hope that they understand the pressing need, at least from our point of view. We believe that a resolution is necessary that deals with the humanitarian situation on the ground, particularly in Jenin, including the issue of investigating what has happened in the refugee camp there and with the fact that Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) have not been implemented. In other words, at this stage we accept setting aside the issue of an international presence, leaving this important matter to the Secretary-General, his efforts and his consultations with members of the Security Council.

There is an Arab draft resolution, one which we believe is appropriate. Nevertheless, we have also noted other initiatives positively, including an initiative put forward by the delegation of the United Kingdom. Palestine, indeed the Arab Group and, of course, the Arab member of this Council, Syria, will be ready to work with all members of the Council to reach satisfactory language, language that will enable the Council to express itself and to take the necessary action in response to the humanitarian situation and to the fact that the two relevant resolutions have not yet been implemented.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): I apologize for responding at this late hour, but I am compelled to respond to some of the points raised by the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Israeli actions in Jenin and elsewhere were undertaken reluctantly and in self-defence against an unrelenting campaign of violence and terrorism incited, supported and financed by the Palestinian Authority. They were taken only after the Palestinian Authority was given ample opportunity to fulfil its commitment and after we had exercised utmost restraint in the face of a wave of suicide-bombing massacres. We have not endeavoured to harm the Palestinian people. Rather, we have only tried to uproot the infrastructure of terror.

We deeply regret the death of any civilians, whether Israeli or Palestinian, but we maintain that primary responsibility for their deaths lies with the terrorists, who have taken up residence in civilian areas and refugee camps, in violation of international law and Security Council resolutions and in callous disregard for those whom they endangered.

We share the concern of the international community about the humanitarian situation, but, in our view, dead Israelis are also a humanitarian problem. If anyone is guilty of war crimes and terrorism, it is those elements of the Palestinian leadership that have provided the funding and the political and ideological support for terrorism. What motivates an 18-year-old girl to blow herself up in a supermarket? How long can the Council ignore the continual incitement by the Palestinian media, the education of hatred in Palestinian schools and textbooks, the repugnant embrace of death and suicide, the glorification of suicide bombers and the legitimization of terrorism by political and spiritual leaders?

For how long can we blame only the occupation? Occupation was not the problem between 1948 and 1967, and the Palestinians did not then establish a State. It was not a problem at Camp David, and still peace was rejected. The Palestinian side may have issued a condemnation of terrorism to placate Western Governments. But their actions speak louder than their words. Still, the Palestinian side chooses to place the full blame for the current crisis, not to mention the entire conflict, squarely on the shoulders of Israel, as if 54 years of rejecting Israel's very right to exist and fomenting hatred of Jews has nothing to do with the continuation of the violence and unrest in the region. In the Palestinian view, it is Israel alone that is responsible and Israel alone that had failed to take the necessary steps for peace.

But the Council has told us otherwise. The Palestinians, too, have responsibilities — even if they exhibit no intention whatsoever of abiding by them. Yesterday, Ambassador Al-Kidwa informed the Council that the Palestinians would do nothing — there would be no negotiations and no action to combat terror — until Israel fully withdraws. His statement is a clear defiance of resolution 1402 (2002), which also calls for a meaningful ceasefire and an end to terrorism and incitement and cooperation with General Zinni as reciprocal steps, which the Palestinian leadership refuses to take. Such assertions are typical and enable the Palestinian leadership to continue to perpetuate the fiction that a succession of Israeli leaders are solely to blame for the situation.

Today, it is Sharon for his refusal to make concessions to terrorism. Before him, it was Barak, who offered the Palestinians statehood in virtually all the West Bank, shared sovereignty in Jerusalem and a solution to the refugee problem, and was rewarded with terror. Before him came Netanyahu and before him Peres, both of whom were rewarded with Palestinian terror. And before them was Yitzhak Rabin. He, too, was a problem and an obstacle to peace in the region. Indeed, every Israeli leader has been an obstacle to peace.

Apparently, the only regional leader who has not been an obstacle to peace is the great liberal democrat Yasser Arafat.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no further speakers on my list.

Before I close the meeting I would like to say that, as far as I understand, contacts among interested delegations have as yet not led to a situation in which the Council could directly take up consideration of a draft resolution in consultations. These contacts will continue during the lunch break, and we shall hold consultations at 4 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4516

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4516th meeting

Friday, 19 April 2002, 8.45 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Rivas
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Bhuckory
	Mexico	Ms. Lajous
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Singapore	Ms. Foo
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

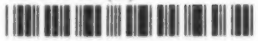
Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 17 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/431).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-34515 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 8.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 17 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/431)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the decision taken at the 4515th meeting, I invite the representative of Israel to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the decision taken at the 4515th meeting, I invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council is meeting today in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/471, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/2002/471) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian)*: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1405 (2002).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 8.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4517

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4517th meeting

Tuesday, 23 April 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Ocaziones
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Jingree
	Mexico	Ms. Lajous
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

The situation in Angola.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-34805 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Angola in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for Special Assignments in Africa.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Gambari to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari.

Mr. Gambari: In my briefing of 20 March 2002, I informed the Council that the Secretary-General intended to send me on an extended mission to Angola, which intention was endorsed by members of the Council in their last presidential statement on Angola, contained in document S/PRST/2002/7, of March 28 2002. The objectives of the mission were to deliver a written message from the Secretary-General to President dos Santos; to witness the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding, which is complementary to the Lusaka Protocol; to clarify the role of the United Nations during the current, and next, phase of the peace process; and to have substantive discussions with the President and with senior members of the Government on how the United Nations can best assist in the peace process.

During my mission to Luanda, I was received in audience twice by President dos Santos. I also had discussions — often more than once — with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Planning, Finance, Territorial Administration and Social Reinsertion, as well as with the Chief of Staff of the armed forces of Angola. Furthermore, I met with parliamentarians, leaders of political parties — including those of UNITA — representatives of the churches, national and international non-governmental organizations and members of the diplomatic corps — including the ambassadors of the P-5 countries resident in Luanda, ambassadors of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), ambassadors of the European Union and ambassadors of the troika.

Today I am in a position to report that, as a result of the consultations I had with the authorities and other stakeholders in the Angolan peace process, there is now greater clarity concerning the role of the United Nations in the present, as well as the next, phase of the process. Moreover, it is also fair to say that the prospects for lasting peace in Angola are brighter now than ever before, and certainly better than during the previous peace agreements aimed at ending the conflict in the country. The following are my main observations.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Luanda on 4 April 2002 was perhaps the most significant public event to take place during my mission to Angola. The Memorandum formally brought a halt to the hostilities in one of Africa's longest-running wars, which had brought untold suffering to too many people in that country. As members of the Council may be aware, the Memorandum details the responsibilities of the Angolan armed forces and those of UNITA for the observation of a ceasefire, for quartering UNITA soldiers and their families and for the collection and destruction of weapons. The Memorandum also grants

a blanket amnesty for all crimes committed during the conflict.

Furthermore, the Government also undertook the following tasks in the Memorandum: to provide assistance to UNITA soldiers; to manage the quartering areas; to select and reincorporate about 5,000 members of the UNITA military force into the Angolan armed forces and the police; and to demobilize over 50,000 UNITA soldiers. The estimated timeframe for the completion of these tasks is 262 days from d-day, which was 4 April 2002. The Government of Angola is also committed under the Memorandum to assist the families of UNITA soldiers, about 300,000 persons, and to provide vocational training and reintegrate former combatants into civilian life and into the productive sector.

Moreover, in its 15-point peace plan, which had been announced earlier, the Government of Angola pledged to give assistance to demobilized soldiers, including those from the last three wars — who are estimated to number about 150,000 — and to take care of the disabled, orphaned and widowed. In addition, the Government of Angola undertook the resettlement of an estimated 4.5 million displaced persons, a figure provided by the Government itself.

In my statement at the signing ceremony commemorating the agreement of the Memorandum of Understanding, I urged the parties to the Angolan conflict to seize the historic opportunity to end the tragedy of war in Angola once and for all. I also pledged the support of the United Nations in the entire peace process.

However, in signing the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the United Nations as witness, I expressed, and entered into the text of the Memorandum, a reservation concerning the non-recognition by the United Nations of any general amnesty that includes genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. That statement of principle left some apprehension in the minds of UNITA and some people in the armed forces of Angola — as well as in some segments of civil society — who felt that this position by the United Nations may undermine the peace process, because some combatants may believe that it negates the provisions of the amnesty law that had recently been passed by the Angolan National Assembly. I went to great lengths and spent considerable time during my visit to explain and clarify the principled position of the United Nations on this issue.

Concerning the irreversibility of the peace, all the people with whom I had consultations, including the authorities and UNITA, believe that the chances of returning to war in Angola — war such as the ones we saw in 1994 and 1998 — are now very negligible. A main factor contributing to this view is the military debility of UNITA, including through the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions. In this regard it may be of interest to recall that General Gato, the Secretary-General of UNITA, who is now head of the Joint Military Commission, has said that he was defeated not by the armed forces of Angola, but by United Nations forces. I think that this may be a bit of an exaggeration, but it is the first time that somebody has testified to the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions.

In any case, other factors that have contributed to the view that the chances of returning to large-scale war are now very negligible are the war fatigue on both sides of the conflict and in the general population; the adherence of all UNITA regional military commanders to the Memorandum of Understanding; and the physical presence in Luanda of the Chief of Staff of UNITA military forces, General Ukwachitembo "Kamorteiro", his Deputy, General Samy, and other senior military officers, as well as the full backing given to the Memorandum by the political leadership of UNITA under its Secretary-General, Lukamba Paulo Gato, who has also been based in Luanda since 3 April 2002. Thus, all those who might want to perpetuate the war are already back and located in Luanda.

However, the irreversibility of the peace process will depend on a number of factors. First, the quartering of UNITA soldiers has to be done right, promptly and on schedule. Secondly, the humanitarian needs of their families, including food and medicine, must be met adequately. Thirdly, conditions must be created for the promotion of national reconciliation and national reconstruction. Fourthly, UNITA should emerge as a united political party and as a credible interlocutor in the peace process and democratization in Angola. In this regard, I stressed during my meetings with Mr. Gato and Mr. Manuvakola, who is the leader of UNITA-Renovada in Parliament, that the United Nations has no intention of interfering or mandate to interfere in the internal affairs of UNITA or in the emergence of the eventual leader of UNITA. On the contrary, we in the United Nations hold the view

that UNITA should be allowed to choose its leadership in complete freedom and without any external interference.

I would now like to touch on the role of the United Nations. The Angolan Government has divided the peace process into two phases. The first deals with military issues and the implementation of related tasks under the Memorandum of Understanding, while the second will deal with political matters under the Lusaka Protocol. The latter includes, inter alia, the issue of the second round of presidential elections; the appointment of some governors, ambassadors and provincial administrators; the adoption of new national symbols; and what is called the "deepening" of democracy, including the revision of the Constitution.

In the first and present phase of the peace process, the United Nations is expected to participate as observer in the work of the Joint Military Commission, which is charged with the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and with providing up to 11 military observers, including to the Technical Group of the Joint Military Commission. The United Nations is also expected to provide technical assistance in the quartering areas, of which there are now 36; to assist the Armed Forces of Angola in managing these areas; and to provide humanitarian assistance to the families of UNITA military forces and to about 4.5 million internally displaced persons.

The Government has, however, assumed primary responsibility for the funding and management of the quartering areas and for providing assistance to the family members of UNITA military forces in the quartering areas. It has also created the National Reconstruction Service to facilitate the process of reintegration of former combatants into the productive sectors and civilian life of the country.

However, the Angolan Government is requesting the United Nations to help in providing technical and material support, especially in the quartering areas, and in the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and their families. In order to raise funds to help to meet some of the challenges of the peace process, the Government is planning to organize an international donors conference in two phases. Phase one is intended to address emergency needs related to the peace process, such as support for demobilization, disarmament and reintegration activities, as well as the repair of infrastructure, such as bridges and roads, to allow access to the quartering areas and to those areas where the family members of UNITA military forces would be assembled. This first phase of the donor conference is planned for October 2002. Phase two, which would require a longer time for preparations, is likely to take place some time in 2003.

On sanctions, there is an apparent consensus within the country that, while the suspension of the travel ban on UNITA officials would be in order, it is premature at this point to talk about the lifting of other sanctions, especially those associated with the military, such as the arms embargo, fuel, diamond sales, funds and bank accounts. Some of those consulted, however, expressed the view that the maintenance of the travel ban on UNITA officials is now difficult to justify, especially after the National Assembly has offered a general amnesty to all UNITA members and referred to a period of 45 days within which they may wish to take advantage of the amnesty.

Furthermore, UNITA would like the members of its external mission to participate in the peace process and in the process of the reunification of UNITA. Indeed, some of the other stakeholders believe that the lifting of the travel ban would contribute to increased confidence in the peace process itself. In this regard, Mr. Gato, on behalf of UNITA, has written a letter to the President of the Security Council, which he has asked me to deliver, arguing that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and his party's full participation in its implementation are grounds for the lifting of sanctions against UNITA.

On its part, the Government of Angola accepts in principle the lifting of the travel ban against UNITA officials, but has expressed the view that great caution is needed in implementing it and that, in this regard, a case-by-case approach is to be preferred. The argument here is that the international community must be convinced beyond doubt that all UNITA members have indeed abandoned the military option before lifting the travel ban and that this would require time to evaluate the actual behaviour of UNITA during the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding.

The humanitarian situation continues to be critical. The number of internally displaced persons has increased from 4.1 to 4.5 million. This increase reflects especially the population flows from formerly inaccessible areas. The humanitarian agencies in Angola have also been requested to provide assistance

to an additional 300,000 people, the family members of UNITA military forces. There is also an unspecified number of refugees presently in Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Namibia who may wish to be repatriated, in addition to the need to care for orphans and over 200,000 disabled people.

In this regard, the Government has requested United Nations agencies, such as the World Food Programme, to continue to render their support until December 2002. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the international community has subscribed to only 10 per cent of the needs stated in the Consolidated Appeal Process. The Council may therefore wish to appeal again for continued assistance for the people of Angola, especially in this critical phase of the peace process. Meanwhile, the Government has authorized the relevant minister to enter into negotiations with the United Nations Resident Coordinator with a view to reaching a framework agreement on humanitarian relief efforts.

I should like to make the following concluding remarks. It is clear from consultations held during my mission to Angola that the United Nations is expected to play a role in the present phase of the peace process, including military observation of the quartering process, provision of technical and managerial support in quartering areas, demobilization and reintegration, as well as humanitarian support. The United Nations is also expected to chair the Joint Commission during the second phase of the peace process under the Lusaka Protocol.

The Government has also agreed in principle that the mandate of the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA) needs adjustment in order to allow it to support the present phase as well as the next phase of the peace process. Therefore, the Secretary-General has directed that I and my colleagues in the Secretariat should begin critically to assess the areas where the Government has expressed interest in obtaining the support of the United Nations for the peace process and also carefully to identify the tasks involved and the implications in terms of human and financial resources. Those tasks would determine the recommendations that the Secretary-General may make to the Council with regard to possible adjustment of UNOA's current mandate, including the implications for the size of a reconfigured mission and its duration. These are expected to be contained in the Secretary-General's next report to the Council on Angola, which should be ready by next month.

Meanwhile, as a result of preliminary discussions with the Angolan authorities and the United Nations Country Team, as well as with the troika, United Nations support to the peace process may be in the following critical areas: first, military observation of the quartering process and the collection and destruction of weapons; secondly, civilian and human rights observation in the assembly areas for the families of UNITA military forces; thirdly, technical assistance and mobilization of material resources for the soldiers in the quartering areas and their families, as well as for demobilization and reintegration; fourthly, assistance in the preparation and mobilization of resources through the proposed international donors conference; fifthly, humanitarian assistance to the families of UNITA military forces and internally displaced persons, and in demining activities; sixthly, with regard to electoral assistance, President Dos Santos has admitted that the Secretary-General has in fact given his consent in principle to assist Angola in the proposed future national elections; and seventh, assistance in the transition from war to peace in Angola through the extension and consolidation of the structures of State administration through development programmes and national reconciliation programmes.

These issues would be further discussed within the Secretariat with the aim of developing a comprehensive United Nations strategy for Angola, including the future role of UNOA, in consultation with the Government of Angola.

The President (spoke in Russian): I now give the floor to the representative of Angola.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. This has indeed been a very productive month for the Council, and the manner in which you have been conducting the deliberations has been a key factor. I would also like to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby of Norway, on his outstanding performance during his mandate.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the cessation of hostilities marked a turning point in the history of the Republic of Angola. The Security Council of the United Nations, in its capacity as the body whose primary function is the

maintenance of international peace and security, played a very pivotal role in the achievement of peace in Angola. Time and again, through the relevant resolutions and presidential statements, utilizing the tools and policy instruments at its disposal, it expressed the will of the international community regarding the conflict in Angola by upholding principles of democratic cohabitation in accordance with international law. The combined efforts of our institution, the cooperation of the Member States and the efforts of the Government of Angola led to the cessation of hostilities in Angola, as expressed in the Memorandum of Understanding to complement the Lusaka Protocol.

At this point, I wish to express my Government's appreciation to the Secretary-General as well as to the Governments of Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States, members of the troika, for having witnessed and co-signed the Memorandum of Understanding on 4 April. The fact that Under-Secretary-General Gambari, just returning from his three-week stay in Angola, is briefing the Council on his findings today is indeed a very positive development. My Government fully supports the recommendations contained in his briefings and stands ready to work with the Secretary-General on the way to advance the peace process in Angola.

I am pleased to announce that, as of this moment, there have been no violations of the ceasefire.

As the Council is aware, the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding is divided into two phases. Phase one comprises the quartering, disarmament, integration and demobilization of 55,000 UNITA combatants and accommodating approximately 350,000 members of their families. The parties agreed that 5,000 military personnel will be integrated into the Angolan armed forces and national police, while the remainder will be demobilized and integrated into civil society, accompanied by their families.

By the conclusion of phase one the military obstacles to the implementation of the remaining political items under the Lusaka Protocol will have been removed. Therefore the parties have agreed that upon conclusion of phase one, the Joint Commission to oversee the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol will be reinstated, enabling the process of national reconciliation and leading to national elections.

Although the ceasefire is holding and the parties are determined to achieve lasting peace in the Republic of Angola, my Government is aware of the magnitude of the challenges that it faces. Furthermore, my Government recognizes that the prevalence of lasting peace is predicated upon the successful implementation of the Lusaka Protocol.

The United Nations and the international community have a critical role to play in the success of the peace process. During phase one, the United Nations is called upon to provide military and non-military observers, to participate in the Joint Military Commission and to provide much-needed technical and material assistance for the quartering, demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of UNITA's members. Additionally, the United Nations is called upon to provide technical assistance and to mobilize resources for soldiers and their families in and around quartering areas, as well as in the preparation of the donors conference for the emergency humanitarian situation. Subsequently, during phase two, the United Nations is called upon to resume its chairmanship of the Joint Commission mandated by the Lusaka Protocol to oversee the process of national reconciliation and reconstruction leading up to the provision of technical support for national elections.

With peace a reality, Angola will be ready finally to embark on a sustainable programme to address medium- and long-term reconstruction needs. We expect the United Nations to play a central role in assisting the Government in the organizing and mobilizing of support for an international donors conference.

The participation of the United Nations in the peace process in Angola is, without doubt, a fundamental factor for its success and for the strengthening of democracy in Angola. My Government welcomes resolution 1404 (2002), which extends the mandate of the monitoring mechanism on sanctions, as a manifestation of this body's commitment to lasting peace in the Republic of Angola. Sanctions remain an effective policy instrument to ensure the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol and to prevent any departure from the spirit of peace growing in Angola. While sanctions will continue to act as a catalyst for enduring peace, the Government of the Republic of Angola stands ready to cooperate with the Security Council on the

consideration of appropriate exemptions so as to facilitate the process of national reconciliation.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to call upon the international community to continue its immeasurable support in order to alleviate the suffering of millions of internally displaced persons who are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Angola for his kind words addressed to me.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to take part in informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.